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NEBRASKA CHARLIE.

By Col. Prentiss Ingraham.



The Adventurous Life of "Nebraska Charlie,"

(Chas. E. Burgess,)

THE "BOY MEDICINE MAN" OF THE PAWNEES.*

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM,
AUTHOR OF BIOGRAPHIES OF "BUFFALO BILL,"
"WILD BILL," "TEXAS JACK," "WHITE
BEAVER," "NIGHT HAWK GEORGE,"
"BUCKSKIN SAM," "EDDIE BUR-
GESS, THE BOY CHIEF,"
"BRONCO BILLY,"
ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE PRAIRIE RAIDERS.

THE glimmer of a camp-fire shed its rays far out over the prairie, piercing through the foliage and brush of a small clump of timber, in the present State of Nebraska, for, at the time of which I write it was a Territory, and had not a representative star in the flag of our country.

There were four men riding slowly along afar off from the glimmering camp-fire light, and as the eyes of one of them fell upon it, he drew rein quickly, and attracted the attention of his companions to it.

A low talk together of a minute, and the heads of the four horses were turned toward the distant timber.

And in that little clump of woods, lying like an island in a sea, was a camp, where two persons had laid down for the night.

The horses were near, two fine ponies, lariatied out to feed upon the juicy grass, and beneath the shelter of a small wicky-up, or hastily constructed shelter, slept their masters.

In that lone spot, far away from human habitation, one would have expected to find men braving the dangers ever to be met with upon the prairies; but, instead, the camp-fire of logs showed two youths—nay, boys, slumbering innocently beneath their blankets.

One of them soon began to move uneasily, and at last sat up and looked around him.

This awakened the other, who asked:

"What is it, Charlie?"

"I don't know, Eddie."

"If it isn't anything why don't you lay down and go to sleep again, for I'm awful sleepy."

"I was, too, but I ain't now, and I guess something's wrong, for I can't sleep, so I'll have a look at the ponies."

The speaker arose as he said this, and displayed the fact thereby that he was very young, scarcely twelve, and a well-formed, dark-faced boy, who had it in him to play a man's part if called upon to do it.

He was dressed in buckskin jacket, leggings, and hunting-shirt, and wore moccasins, and a broad sombrero.

* Also known as "Wild Charlie," and a brother of Eddie Burgess, "The Boy Chief of the Pawnees."

Taking up from the ground where he had been lying a belt of arms, he buckled them around his slender waist, and stepped out from under the shelter, to walk away in the gloom beyond the camp fire.

Hardly had he disappeared when the other occupant of the wicky-up sat up on his blanket and muttered:

"If Charlie can't sleep there's something wrong, for he's like an Injun, father says, to snuff danger."

"So I'll look about, too."

And up he arose to a standing position, smaller than the other, more slender, younger, and with long golden hair and blue eyes, while the other had locks as black as a crow, and eyes dark and piercing; and yet they were brothers—the one Charlie Burgess, the other Eddie Burgess, border boys, and the sons of a worthy farmer whose ranch was forty miles away from their camp.

The boys were *en route* to the home of a young friend, where they intended visiting for a few weeks, and well skilled in prairie craft, cunning as Indians, and brave as lions, they were going alone to the ranch of their boy comrade, and this was their first camp on the plains, where their lives depended upon their own valor and sagacity, for those were days when prowling bands of red-skins were roving hither and thither bent on mischief, and just as bad, white renegades who preyed upon their own race for booty.

The two brothers, young as they were, could ride like Indians, follow a trail as unerringly, and could handle their rifles and revolvers with unerring skill, and they were both armed to the teeth.

When Charlie, who is the hero of this biography—for I am writing no tale of fiction now, kind reader—went out to reconnoiter about the camp, his steps led him to the spot where the ponies were lassoed out.

Instantly he saw that neither one was feeding, but stood with pricked up ears gazing out into the darkness across the prairie.

"What is it, Butler?" he asked, as he patted the pony upon his shoulder affectionately.

The animal seemed to understand the question, for he gave a low snort, as of warning.

"Good pony," said Charlie, and instantly he retraced his way to the camp and found his brother just coming from under the wicky-up, rifle in hand, and with his belt, containing two revolvers and a hunting knife, strapped about his waist.

"Something's up, Eddie, for the ponies have scented it."

"Then we had better make tracks, Charlie."

"No, Eddie, for we may run into the enemy."

"We'll just coony up this tree and wait."

And Charlie set the example by swinging his rifle to his back, rolling the blankets up to look as though human forms were beneath, and then climbing up into the thick branches of a tree, beneath which their wicky-up was built.

"You sit there, Eddie, and I'll stay here, and we can see all that goes on within the circle of the firelight," said Charlie.

"But the ponies, Charlie?"

"Well, if it is anybody who wants to steal

the ponies, they'll try to get more and come for the camp."

"Hark!"

Both listened attentively, and there came to their ears the distant fall of hoofs upon the prairie, and this it was that had evidently attracted the keen senses of the ponies.

Then the sound ceased, and Charlie said in a low tone:

"They are coming on foot now, Eddie, for fear we may hear the horses."

"Then they mean us harm, Charlie."

"We will know soon, and we can be ready for them."

Then the two boys, in this their first great peril alone, set to wishing that this person and that one was with them, until Charlie said:

"I wish Buffalo Bill was here."

"So do I, Charlie, for he isn't afraid of anything, and it would be just fun for him, and it isn't for us, is it?"

"No, Eddie, it don't seem funny; but we are border boys, and we have got to face what's before us."

This is what the two boys bravely decided upon doing, and they remained silently waiting for matters to take a more tangible form than sounds upon the prairie.

Presently one of the ponies started, snorted, and ran to the end of his lariat, and Charlie whispered:

"Somebody was near Butler then, Eddie."

"Yes," whispered back Eddie, and again came a silence between them.

For a long time not a sound was heard, and then the two boys started suddenly, for four bright flashes illuminated the darkness, and as many shots rung out with sharp, ominous reports.

There were some dull thuds followed, the blankets moved under the pressure of bullets, and then four men came bounding forward.

As they came into the glare of the camp-fire, the one in advance, a tall, long bearded white man, Charlie recognized as one he had seen before.

It had been at Kearney, when he was a prisoner to the soldiers, and under sentence of death as a murderer and renegade, the chief of a band known as the Prairie Raiders.

Charlie had gone to Kearney with his father, and the man condemned to die had attracted his curiosity and sympathy, and his face had often been before him as it had looked that day.

He had heard that the man had escaped, the night after he had seen him, by killing his guard with his irons, and now Charlie beheld that outlaw before him, and instantly he covered him with his rifle, while he called to his brother:

"Take the second one, Eddie!"

Their rifles flashed almost together, and the two men in advance went down, just as they had almost reached the little wicky-up.

The other two outlaws had not seen from whence came the deadly shots, as the firelight had shielded the flashes, and instantly they sprung back to seek cover, when a pistol-shot from Charlie wounded one in the leg and brought him down, while the fourth escaped Eddie's fire and ran with all speed out upon the prairie.

"Quick, Eddie, you keep your rifle on that

fellow, and I'll go for their horses," cried Charlie, and the two boys slipped down from the tree, and the elder ran to his pony, and sprung upon his back, while Eddie began to plot to capture the wounded man, who had drawn himself to a tree, and sat there, his revolver in hand.

Darting across the prairie, Charlie soon came to where four horses were lariatied out, and instantly he dismounted, pulled up the pins, and was about to return with them to camp, when up dashed the fourth of the fugitives.

It was evident that he did not think that he had already been flanked in his intention, for the horseman he had seen dash away, he thought was one of his comrades, mounted upon one of the ponies belonging to the camp fire.

Up he ran, right up to the boy, and called out:

"Is that you, Jim?"

"No, it's Charlie, and you just throw up your hands," was the startling response, and the pistol was shoved right into his face.

The man did not take note of the boyish voice and slight form, for it was the pistol he feared, and up went his hands above his head, while Charlie disarmed him with a coolness and celerity that was surprising, for the prisoner muttered:

"Caught squar', or I are a liar; but who is yer?"

"Charlie Burgess."

"A boy, as I live."

"Yes, I am a boy."

"Not full grown yet, or I'll take ter preachin'."

"No, I am not full grown, but my pistol is, so no foolishness, mister, or I'll have to kid you," said Charlie firmly.

"Don't do it."

"Then do as I tell you."

"Sure!"

"Put one arm down by your side."

This was at once done, and a lariat noose was thrown about his body, holding the arm firmly.

"Now the other."

"You don't mean it."

Charlie raised his revolver and down came the arm, and it too was made fast.

"Now, march for yonder timber," and leading the four captured ponies with his own, Charlie drove his prisoner to camp.

He found Eddie watching the wounded prisoner, who had crawled behind a tree, and remained there silent and motionless.

"Is that you, Charlie?" called out Eddie, as he heard the steps approaching.

"Yes, Eddie; and I've got him and all their horses."

"Where's the other?"

"Behind that tree; but look out, for he's playing possum and may kill you."

As Eddie called out there came a flash from behind the tree, and Charlie's hat was knocked from his head by the bullet.

Instantly he sprung to cover, and calling to Eddie to remain where he was and not expose himself, he drew the prisoner toward him by the lariat, and said:

"Now, you've got to help me capture your pard!"

"I can't do it, boy, for I is tied; but if you lets me free I kin."

"No, I won't untie you; but just walk right toward that tree, and I'll come behind you."

The outlaw was in a trap, and he said in a whining tone:

"He'll shoot me, sure."

"I'll shoot you if you don't mind me."

"Go!"

The man felt the pistol muzzle pushed hard against his back, and at once he moved forward, while Charlie kept behind him at a close step.

"Now, Eddie, be ready," he called out, and the boy advanced upon his hidden foe.

"Say, Buck, that hain't a squar' deal," he called out to the outlaw who was so cleverly made use of.

"It don't look it to you, Jim Healey, but it do ter me, fer I hes a feelin' in ther back thet hain't comfortable," answered the other as he still moved forward with Charlie in his rear.

"I've got a broke leg, or I'd not let two boys take me in," said the other.

"Waal, up with yer grips and end ther circus, fer ther cap'n and Bounce hes chawed grass as yer kin see."

"Quick, Buck, dodge away from the boy and I'll end him."

"No yer don't, fer I mout git ther bullet."

"Waal, I surrenders."

"Then come out here before the fire," called out Charlie.

"I hes a broke leg and can't."

"You crawled there, so crawl back."

"I'll try."

And out from his shelter came the wounded outlaw, and down went his weapons at Charlie's command, and he, too, was securely bound.

Then the boys hastily dug a grave and buried the two dead outlaws, and mounting their ponies, after strapping their prisoners upon two of the horses, they started on the nearest trail to Kearney.

They rode hard, in spite of the groans of the wounded man, and gave up their prisoners to the officer in command, were paid fair prices for their captured horses, and congratulated warmly upon their gallant deed.

Then the two brothers turned their ponies' heads toward their former destination, and went on their way full of pride at their exploit, of which two men, in their position, might have boasted as a great feat.

CHAPTER II.

IN THE HANDS OF CRUEL FOES.

CHARLIE and Eddie Burgess certainly found themselves heroes upon their arrival at the home of the young friend whom they were going to visit when they met with their thrilling adventure.

But they found the settlement, in which was the ranch of their friend, in a state of excitement, regarding the Indians, who were threatening an outbreak along the border.

And all too soon it came, for the denizens of the ranch were awakened in the dead of night to find the red-skins upon them, and a scene of horror followed.

Charlie saw his friends cut down, scalped, and Eddie, he believed, was killed; but he was no

boy to tamely die, when by living he could avenge those he loved.

Down from the upper floor he dropped, from the window upon a shelter over the cellarway, and into this he crept; but he was soon discovered by an Indian chief, and, though he made a desperate fight of it, he was dragged away a captive, and soon after found himself a prisoner, tied to a mustang, and in the midst of ponies laden with booty from the settlement, being carried to the red-skin village far away.

It was a long, hard march for the poor boy, bound as he was day and night, and not fed by his captors; but at last the village was reached, and to his delight he found that Eddie was not dead, though it was sad to see that he, too, was a prisoner to the renegade white chief that had led the attack upon the settlement.

The chief who claimed him lived in a distant village, and had merely allied himself with the renegade's band for the attack upon the settlement, and consequently Charlie was dragged away with him, leaving Eddie behind, for all entreaties to allow them to remain together failed with their cruel-hearted masters.

But Charlie had a nature that rose under difficulty, and instead of repining, he at once decided to make the best of his sad lot, and to plot for one end, and he told the chief, for he spoke Sioux a little, that he rather liked red-skins, and was perfectly willing to remain with them.

Red Buffalo, his captor, was glad to hear this, but he was such a cunning rascal himself, that he took Charlie's assertion with a liberal grain of allowance, and determined to watch him more closely; but he wished to show his goodness by releasing his hands from the thongs that bound them, though he kept the boy's legs tied beneath the pony, and so securely that to escape was impossible.

CHAPTER III.

SAVING A FOE.

THE first night on the march, Red Buffalo and his band encamped in a piece of timber on the banks of a small stream, and Charlie was forced to sleep between the Red Buffalo and a warrior, so that the very thought of attempting to get away had to be given up.

Before dawn the red-skins were astir to continue the march, and Charlie was given a piece of bread, some that had been stolen in the settlement, and a chunk of buffalo-meat to eat for his breakfast, and having been again tied to his pony, he sat upon his back eating his humble meal with considerable relish, and watching the Indians get ready for the march, for, as they were loaded down with plunder, it was no easy task.

While he sat there the quick ear of Eddie Burgess caught a sound off in the river.

It might be a deer running across, attracted by the camp-fires, and it might be a herd of buffaloes.

Then he knew that it was a hostile country, and he felt that perhaps it might be a band of Indians, foes to his captors.

His heart also gave a bound when the thought flashed through his mind:

"Perhaps it is soldiers!"

He saw that the Indians evidently expected no attack, for if they were pursued, they knew that White Snake, the Renegade Chief, was between them and danger.

He also observed that the red-skins had not heard the sound, and then he listened attentively once more.

A low snort told him that whatever was coming it was nearer than before.

Again was heard a splash, and then a clinking sound, as though steel had rung against steel.

"It must be cavalry," said Charlie to himself, and then his heart beat high with hope.

Then came the call of a night-bird, and the boy knew that it was an Indian signal.

If Indians he would be perhaps killed at their first charge, bound as he was, and in the full fire-light, but if soldiers he would stand a chance of rescue.

Yet soldiers he was now confident they were not, and he determined to act for his own advantage.

The Indians were also busy packing their booty on their horses, and getting all ready for the march, that even their acute hearing had not been attracted by sounds beyond the camp, and the guards had been called in.

"The Red Buffalo has ears," said Charlie, addressing the chief in his best Sioux, as he just then came near him.

"The pale-face boy speaks true," and the Red Buffalo stepped quickly to his side.

"The pale-face boy is the friend of the Red Buffalo, and he wishes not that his foes should come upon him.

"Let the Red Buffalo listen," and Charlie pointed toward the river, which glided by not thirty paces distant.

The Red Buffalo made a spring toward the bank, listened an instant, and then his wild war-cry, rallying his braves, rung out piercingly in the crisp morning air.

Instantly every brave sprung to the shelter of the nearest tree, and not an instant too soon, for up the bank, out of the river, came floundering horses and riders by the score.

A volley of shots was poured upon them, and many tumbled back into the stream dead or dying.

But others came on, and hot and savage began a hand-to-hand conflict in the timber.

The band of Red Buffalo was at first pressed back, for the attacking party, who were Indians, mounted as they were, rushed upon them with overwhelming force, and in large numbers, and were led by a huge chief, mounted upon a large spotted horse, that carried all before him.

Red Buffalo boldly sprung right in front of him, to meet his attack, and raised his rifle, when the muzzle covered the heart of his large foe, who was not twenty feet from him.

But the cap snapped, and ere he could turn his enemy was upon him, and another second would have ended the days of the Red Buffalo.

Just then, however, there came a sharp crack of a pistol, and the large chief fell from his horse, which dashing by where Charlie's mustang was tied to a tree, was seized by the brave boy.

At the fall of their huge leader, the attacking

warriors halted, wheeled to the right-about, and fled for the river, followed by the exultant Sioux, with a hot fire and the wildest yells.

As they rode into the river many were shot from their ponies and the animals were captured, so that the result was a grand victory for the Sioux, many scalps, two-score captive ponies, and the loss of only half a dozen warriors wounded, and one killed.

Back to the captive boy then came the Red Buffalo and his head braves, and the chief said:

"My pale-face captive is my friend, and I name him *La-tah-cots-tah-ka*.*

"He saved the life of the Red Buffalo, who did not know he had a pistol, and he shall have the scalp and horse of the great chief *Us-sau-wuk-yt*, the foe of my people."

"I had the pistol in my leggings, and I wished to prove I was the friend of the Red Buffalo.

"But let him take the scalp and horse of *Us-sau-wuk-y*, for I do not want them," answered Charlie.

The Red Buffalo seemed to appreciate this double gift immensely, and to show that he could be generous too, he stepped forward and severed the thongs that bound the feet of Charlie, unfastened the lariat that held the pony he rode to a tree, and said:

"*La-tah-cots-tah-ka* shall be the son of the Red Buffalo, who will make him a great warrior, if he is only a pappoose."

Charlie smiled, as though he was immensely pleased, and when soon after the march was continued, he rode free, and trotted along by the side of his adopted father with a look that tickled the cunning Indian, who was delighted with the boy who had done them all such a great service.

CHAPTER IV.

THREE AGAINST ONE.

ALL along the march that day Charlie could see that he was regarded with high favor among the Indians, and also that he was the subject of conversation.

And no wonder, for the surprise upon their camp would have been complete, and by a force their equal in numbers, while they, taken at disadvantage, on foot, hampered by booty, and hemmed in, would certainly have lost all.

But the quick ear of the boy captive had given them a slight warning, and his killing of their hitherto invincible chief, Spotted Horse, had wholly demoralized their foes, and hence they owed all to the youth, and many were glad that the Red Buffalo had so promptly recognized his services by making him a warrior, though he was but a boy.

There were some envious young bucks, who were on their first war-trail, who did not like to see a boy of twelve or thirteen, and a pale-face, put over them, when they were from eighteen to twenty years of age.

But they comforted themselves with the thought that the pale-face boy would never pass through the ordeal he would have to ere he could be recognized as a warrior by the tribe.

And into the village of the Indians, a perfect stronghold in the hills, went the victors, and

* White Eagle.

† Spotted Horse.

those who had been left behind came forth to meet them, with yells of delight at their success, mingling with howls of sorrow at the loss of those who had fallen.

Seeing Charlie, as was their wont the squaws rushed for him, to heap upon him abuse of all kinds, but the stern voice of the Red Buffalo waved them back, while he cried:

"Let my people know that the scalp of the Red Buffalo, and the scalps of his braves, would have hung at the belts of Spotted Horse, the Pawnee, and his warriors, but for this pale-face boy, who is now my friend and the friend of my people, and he shall be known as *La-tah-onts-tah-ka*."

The squaws fell back and Charlie was saved from many an indignity and really physical pain at their hands, while the youngsters of the village crowded about him with every token of admiration, and many a brave in embryo looked at him with envy, and wished he could have become the hero of the fight upon the river—as did the pale-face boy.

To the *tepee* of the Red Buffalo Charlie was taken, and given to understand that he must make himself at home; and, to aid him in this idea, the squaw wife of the chief at once sent him to the spring for water and to the timber near by for wood.

At this the Red Buffalo rebelled, for it was lowering to the dignity of a brave to do menial work; but Charlie's eyes, young as they were, could read that he had a shrew to deal with, and he instantly determined to get upon the good side of the "old red hen," as he mentally called her, so he begged to be allowed to do the work to aid her.

He quickly brought the water, chopped up a large pile of wood, cleaned up the *tepee* and all about it, and won the heart of Fire Eyes, as the squaw was called, before he had been a day in the village.

Then he set about showing her how to cook certain things, for Charlie had hung about the kitchen enough at home to find out something of the culinary art, and with the edibles stolen from the settlement he prepared dainty dishes, and the Red Buffalo felt that he had a treasure indeed, and was quite drawn toward the boy, for he had no children to make his wigwam happy.

Now there were some youngsters in the village that preferred to steal rather than work, and as Charlie spent some time each day in chopping wood, and consequently had piled up a goodly supply behind the *tepee*, they decided to raid upon him for what they needed for their mothers, as it would be far easier than to gather it for themselves.

Charlie was off in the woods getting more fagots, and as he would drag up a large load on a little wagon he had made, and which, though rude, was serviceable, he noticed that the pile seemed to decrease rather than increase.

The Red Buffalo and his warriors were off on a hunt. Fire Eyes was over in the village, for her *tepee* stood apart from the others, and too busy in gossiping to notice what was going on, and consequently Charlie knew that there were thieves at work.

Instantly he determined to watch for the

raiders upon his wood-pile, and he went back into the woods with his wagon; but, as soon as the thicket concealed him, he left the go-cart, ran around through the brush, and came out at a point where he could obtain a view of his *tepee* and at the same time be near enough to act.

Hardly had he gained his point of observation when he saw that which made him mad as a hornet.

There were three Indian boys—two of his own size and one larger—deliberately shouldering his wood and carrying it off to their respective *tepees*.

As they left with their loads, Charlie ran to his wigwam and entered it, at the same time trimming a stick he had hastily cut to have it ready for use.

Hardly had he gained the inside of the wigwam when back the trio of thieves came at a trot, anxious to get several loads stolen before the return of the youth of whom they were thus taking advantage.

They were just raising their loads to their shoulders when Charlie darted around the *tepee* upon them.

They were surprised, that was certain; but from babyhood they had been trained to show no surprise at anything, so stood in stolid silence looking at the pale face boy.

As they did not drop their loads at sight of him, but seemed inclined to brazen it out, Charlie decided to encourage them, and as quick as lightning he ran along the line delivering upon the back of each culprit a stinging blow that made them shout out with pain and drop the wood quickly.

But this at once precipitated matters into a row, for, smarting with pain, the three young red-skins rushed upon the boy together.

Now not one of the fighting quartet had observed that the Red Buffalo had come near with some of his warriors, and sat on their ponies watching the fracas, having seen the wood-stealers, and Charlie dart into the wigwam, and, with an Indian's love of excitement, waited to see the *denouement*.

Each red-skin boy had tried to crush Charlie with his load of wood as he threw it down, but he nimbly sprung one side and squaring off met the attack.

The old saying of "entertaining an angel unawares" came to Charlie then in all its vividness, for some six months before a man had stopped at his father's house, having been all that was left of a small party that had been attacked by Indians.

He had been entertained by Mr. Burgess most hospitably until he could write to Boston for money, and the six weeks that passed before a reply came he had spent mostly with Charlie and Eddie, and given them lessons in the art of boxing, telling them that he was a prize-fighter on his way to California to meet a foe when caught by the Indians.

These lessons now served Charley well, for he threw aside his stick, and, as his three foes rushed upon him, sent them to grass with a skill and ease that surprised, hurt and maddened them.

Up they would stagger and again rush upon him, and, before a blow could be struck the

brave pale-face boy, down would go Ma ter Indian all in a heap.

The red-skins could not understand this any more than could the Red Buffalo, his warriors with him, and all others in the village who caught sight of the fracas, and instantly crowded toward the scene.

Red Buffalo was delighted with his *protege*, and rode forward rapidly to the spot where Charlie stood, his back against the wood-pile his energy had gathered, his foot upon the stick he had begun the fight with, and his hands squared to meet his foes.

It was a sight for an artist, with the brave pale-face boy, alone in the Indian village, bravely meeting his three adversaries, any one of whom seemed an equal for him in appearance, and the red-skin lookers on certainly were amazed.

But the trio of boys were hard to whip, and still pressed the fighting.

Their faces were cut and bleeding, their eyes and noses swelling, and they were pretty well battered up by Charlie's hard knuckles, which had been skinned by the blows, that were his only wounds.

Again the larger of the three rushed upon him, and determined to end the affair. Charlie sprung one side and sent a telling blow under the right ear of his foe, that not only brought him down, but kept him there senseless.

Then he urged the fighting, for before the two others were ready for the double rush at him he was upon them, doubling one up by a fearful blow just above the belt, and catching the fist of the other upon his left fore-arm, he brought his right knuckles so squarely under the chin of the third that he sailed backward in a manner that was startling.

A yell broke from Red Buffalo at this, and a few warriors joined the chorus, for their admiration could not be suppressed, while Charlie started to follow up his advantage, but was at once proclaimed victor, as the two last recipients of his favors took to their heels, while the third still lay unconscious.

CHAPTER V.

COWING A WARRIOR.

THOUGH the Indians admired the skill of Charlie, yet, as a pale-face, they could not bear to see their own race defeated by him, and angry frowns went round the crowd, for now half the red-skins in the village were there.

In a few words the tired-out, panting boy told the Red Buffalo how the three boys were stealing his wood, piled up for Fire Eyes, and of course the squaw he was serving so well looked daggers not only at the culprits, but at their parents, while the chief told Charlie he had done right, and to keep it up if he found others stealing from him; for, if he had a white face, his heart was an Indian heart, and he was worthy to be a young chief.

In the mean time, the largest one of the three thieves had not yet recovered consciousness, and just then his father rode up, and, wild with rage, demanded who had killed his son.

"He isn't dead, but playing 'possum, because I licked him," boldly said Charlie.

This brought the ire of the chief upon Charlie,

for he was second in power to Red Buffalo in the village, and he said savagely:

"The Panther will kill the pale-face boy."

Red Buffalo would have interfered, but like a spring of the beast after whom he was named the Indian was upon Charlie, his hand grasping his throat.

But suddenly he started backward, stumbled over a pile of fagots and fell upon the wood-pile, while Charlie following him up kept a pistol full against his breast.

A yell went up from the Indians, but the brave boy held the weapon hard against the chief's breast, while he said:

"The Panther is a coward to beat a boy, and if the Red Buffalo says so I will kill him."

"No, the White Eagle must not kill the Panther, nor shall the Panther hurt him," said Red Buffalo stepping forward, and instantly Charlie returned his pistol to the breast pocket of his buckskin hunting-shirt, and sprung beyond his reach.

All could see that the Panther had been terribly frightened by the boy, for though he had never fired a pistol, he had witnessed the deadly effect of the weapons in the hands of the white scouts and soldiers, and stood in holy horror of the little "shooting-iron."

It was the same pistol which Charlie had kept concealed in a secret pocket of his leggings, and which Red Buffalo had allowed him to keep; but Charlie felt now that he would be forced to give the weapon up, and as he had managed to secrete another revolver, and had it hidden away, the cunning boy determined to yield it with the best grace possible, and he said quickly:

"The pale-face boy has no anger for the Panther, for he likes him."

"The Little Panther stole from the Red Buffalo, and he fought the pale face with two others."

"See, he is not hurt, and the pale-face boy gives the Panther this pistol, and will show him how to use it."

He handed the pistol as he spoke to the chief, who, seeing his son, Little Panther, rise to his feet, was appeased in his wrath, and at once accepted the revolver with a grunt of delight, and became the envy of the other warriors, excepting Red Buffalo, who had a single-barrel weapon he seemed afraid to fire off.

But Charlie could see that the Panther only held out a flag of truce for awhile, and that he would yet get his revenge for the fright he had received, and the severe beating his son had gotten at his hands, and he determined to watch him.

CHAPTER VI.

A FEARFUL ORDEAL.

THE first step the Panther made to get even with Charlie, was to suggest that, as he wore the name of a warrior, he must stand the ordeal all had to pass through, before he was really entitled to be considered as such.

As he hinted this around among the different warriors, it soon began to tell upon the Red Buffalo, in a pressure that forced him to order a council to consider when the affair should take place.

Charlie now understood the Sioux tongue well enough to know that he would have a fearful trial to pass through, from all he heard said about the camp.

He had no desire to become a warrior, in the Indian acceptation of the term, and the longer he dwelt in their village, the more he hated them, for he realized well, young as he was, that their ways were not his ways, and that only a debased nature could live the lives they did.

As he had done an act of bravery that entitled him to the rank of a warrior in spite of his years, and his adopted father, the Red Buffalo, had determined he should be made such, he had too much innate pluck to back out, so braced himself for the coming ordeal.

There were a number of other applicants for the high honor, and, when the time for the diabolical ceremonies came, Charlie took his stand in the row of red-skins, a score in number, who were to stand the test.

First there came a dance, rude, wild, barbarous, and it was kept up without cessation to see who could stand it the longest.

Now in this Charlie had the advantage, for while the savages really were worked up to the highest pitch of excitement, that helped to prostrate them, Charlie's wildness was only assumed and he spared himself so well, that sinewy boy that he was, with wonderful powers of endurance, he saw his fellows drop down one by one with utter exhaustion, while he continued on to the last, and then could not withstand a smile of pride at his triumph so far.

He saw that Red Buffalo was pleased at this, but that the Panther and many others were not.

Then followed, as soon as all were sufficiently rested, foot-races, and Charlie ran like a deer and came in among the leaders, leaving three-fourths of the field behind, while in leaping, he found more than half of the longer-legged red-skins were his superiors.

In bow and arrow shooting Charlie was even with the others, for a bow had been his first weapon, when but four years old, and he was a dead shot with it.

In riding he was also at home, and astonished the others, and though he could be thrown down in a wrestling match, not even his large foes cared to face him when it came to boxing.

These pastimes and trials occupied the first day, and the second was devoted to showing nerve.

A large tree had been smoothed off upon one side, and against this, one at a time, the aspirants for warrior-hood took their stands, while the old warriors were to see just what they would undergo without flinching.

To test this, a warrior would stand ten paces away from the victim, for he was nothing else, and throw a tomahawk with a precision to come as near his head as was possible and yet miss it.

The very first throw of a chief resulted in the death of the young brave, for the tomahawk cut into his skull; but, as it was an accident, nothing was thought of it, and the next in order took his stand with a fearless face.

Charlie was the last of the lot, and had not only seen one killed, but several gashed on the head, an ear or two cut off, and some very wild throwing.

But he boldly took his stand, and never flinched as he saw that the Panther was to do the tomahawk throwing at him.

It may be that the Red Buffalo observed the sinister look upon the face of the chief, for he said sternly:

"The Panther never hurts a young warrior, so let him not do so now, or the Red Buffalo will kill him."

The Panther scowled, but he threw the flint tomahawk with evident care not to hurt Charlie, and the weapon sunk into the tree some two inches from his head.

The second tomahawk buried itself into the tree within an inch of Charlie's head, and the Panther turned away, evidently foiled in his purpose by the stern words of threat spoken by the head chief, whom he dared not anger.

Having stood this trying ordeal, the next scene was one of mutilation, for large slits were cut into the flesh of the aspirants, thongs were fastened into them, and though suffering the most excruciating agony, no sound was heard of moaning among the entire lot of young braves.

And thus ended the fearful ordeal, and Charlie became a warrior, but sickened by all he had seen and passed through, suffering from the wounds in his flesh, bleeding and exhausted, he staggered to the tepee of the Red Buffalo, and seemed to feel that he must die.

But then his kindness to the squaw Fire Eyes had its reward, for she bathed and bound up his wounds, gave him a cooling herb-tea to drink, and nursed him most tenderly back to his former strength once more.

CHAPTER VII.

CHARLIE CAPTURES A PRIZE.

WITHOUT any great adventure to speak of, or such as in his wild Indian life would be so considered, Charlie Burgess's days passed away in the red-skin village until several months had gone by since his capture.

All this time he had not forgotten the one idea of his life, which was to make his escape; but to do so was a most perilous undertaking.

Although he was treated as one of them, yet he knew the Indians, men, women and children had an eye on him.

His seemingly perfect contentment in the life he led did not wholly deceive them, and when he would go off on a hunt sometimes by himself, he would unexpectedly find a warrior somewhere in his vicinity, as though by accident.

It was many long, weary miles to the nearest settlement, and he knew that hostile tribes lay between him and the spot he so longed to reach, while he dared not yet trust himself to make the trip alone.

One day he rode out on his little pony which Red Buffalo had given him, determined to spend the day in hunting antelope.

He saw a herd in the distance, and in trying to get around it so as the wind would not betray him, for he was to windward of them, and he

knew they would scent him, he went much further than he expected.

At last he got to a place where he felt he could creep within range unseen, and dismounting, he tied his pony and started on his way.

He had gone but a short distance when he suddenly came upon a horse lariat out to feed in a ravine.

Quickly he sprung to cover, and began to glance around for the rider.

But he was nowhere visible, and after a searching look at the mustang he saw that it did not belong to any warrior in his camp.

It had on it a cavalry saddle and bridle, and was a clean-limbed cream-colored animal, with jet-black mane and tail.

His heart now beat high with hope, for it might be a soldier's horse, or perhaps a scout's, and if so rescue loomed up before him.

But Charlie was naturally cautious, and his life among the red-skins had increased that caution, and he did not take it for granted, on account of the saddle and bridle, that the animal belonged to a white man, but determined to wait and see.

Accordingly he made a hasty inspection about the animal, and discovered the trail left by a shoe-shod foot, and not one that was moccasined.

This seemed further proof that the rider was not an Indian, but still Charlie took matters coolly, and quietly ensconced himself behind a clump of bushes, that grew not thirty paces from the horse, determined to await the return of the master of the mustang.

The trail had led up to the top of the wooded hill, and the rider, whoever he was, had doubtless seen the herd of antelope and was then gone to get a shot at them.

As patiently as a full-blooded Indian would have done, Charlie waited, and soon there came to his ears the sound of a distant shot.

This seemed another convincing proof that the rider of the mustang was not an Indian, for few of the red-skins at that time were armed with rifles.

And there Charlie waited, and again distinctly to his ears came three shots in rapid succession, which proved that the man, whoever he might be, was armed with a repeating rifle, as the reports were too sharp and loud for a revolver, the ear of the boy detected.

An Indian with a repeating rifle then was too great a rarity for Charlie to doubt for an instant that it was a white man who fired the shots, yet still he remained concealed and calmly waited.

For half an hour, perhaps, he waited, and then a sound on his left caused him to start, when he had expected to see the rider of the beautiful mustang come down the hill in front of him.

To his surprise he now beheld the one for whom he was waiting, and the sight did not please him, for he started and momentarily became a trifle nervous.

What he saw was an Indian, in war-paint and the feathers of a chief, and whom he could not but recognize, from the many stories told of him, by the remarkable manner in which his face was painted.

One side of it was white, and the other side jet-black, the line being drawn equally, the nose dividing the light from the dark, and being painted in unison.

Gorgeously-dyed feathers of the eagle were in his chief's bonnet or head-dress, and though he was dressed in buckskin, beaded and worked with quills, the Indian wore a pair of handsome cavalry boots, the heels of which were armed with spurs.

In one hand he carried a rifle, and the other held the rein of Charlie's own pony, upon the back of which hung two antelopes.

About the waist of the red-skin was a belt containing a revolver and a bowie-knife, which showed that, Indian though he was, he preferred the weapons of the white man to those of his race, as his bow and arrows were hanging at his back.

Charlie was armed with a bow and arrows, and the revolver which I have said he managed to secrete, and he knew that in a fair fight the chief would have the advantage.

Besides, he recognized him, by his painted face and boots, to which the cream-colored horse added conviction, as an often described Dog Soldier Sioux, by the name of Two Face.

He knew the Indian chief had a daring band under him, and was the foe of the Red Buffalo Sioux and of the whites too, and was noted as a warrior with few equals and no superior in combat.

Two Face had found his pony, that was certain, and had made use of him in carrying his game; but the light moccasined feet of Charlie Burgess had left no trail, and the chief was coming back for his own horse, not knowing whither the rider of the mustang he had found had gone.

But his searching eyes, wary step, and whole manner indicated that he was ready to meet a surprise.

Seeing his own mustang awaiting him however, he seemed to feel that the owner of the pony he had found, had not come that way, and instantly he walked with a more confident step.

But, just as he laid his hand upon the mane of his own horse he received a stunning blow which sent him senseless to the ground, for Charlie had glided from his covert as noiselessly as a panther, and holding his bow, with the arrow fitted, ready, should the chief turn, had gotten up to him undiscovered, and then raising his revolver, which hung to his waist by a buckskin thong, he struck a telling blow with the barrel upon the head of the Indian, who sunk in his tracks as though life had left him.

With eager hands he then deprived him of his weapons, slinging the splendid Winchester rifle the Indian carried upon his own back, after which he bound him securely with the lariat he took from the mustang, for his own lasso was doing duty by holding the antelopes in place.

"Now I'll go back to the village," said Charlie in high glee.

But, as the Indian still remained motionless, he began to fear he had killed him, instead of stunning him, as had been his intention.

"Here, Two Face, wake up; a little lick like that oughtn't hurt your hard Injun head," said

Charlie, at the same time feeling the skull to see if it was broken.

A gash was there, which had bled a little, but Charlie had seen enough of wounds to feel that it was not dangerous.

"Hop up, old man, for it's a long way to camp," he said, stirring up the Indian with his foot.

But the chief lay motionless, seeming not to even breathe.

"You are mashing your feathers, Injun, so come, get up."

But still the chief remained as before.

"I believe you are playing 'possum, for that lick wouldn't kill me, soft as my head is."

"Come, get up, for I'll not leave you."

Still no movement of the Indian.

"Oh! I savvy your little game, red-skin."

"You want me to skip off and leave you, thinking you are dead; but I ain't that kind of boy, so up with you."

But the chief still remained as before, and Charlie took out his knife.

"Now I'll raise you, I bet," he said, and he pricked the Indian in the arm.

But not a muscle twitched, and Charlie really began to fear that the red-skin was dead.

Yet he tried the pricking process again, and yet with no result. "You're too much for me to lift upon your horse, or I'd do it, and carry you in that way."

"But I'll tie the lariat to your feet and drag you in, I guess, if I can't raise you from the dead."

A moment he stood in thought, gazing down upon the red-skin, and then his face lighted up, and he thrust his hand into a pocket in his hunting shirt and drew out several matches, a quantity of which had been captured upon Red Buffalo's raid, and which Charlie had told his adopted father the use of.

Stooping down he ignited the match, and quickly thrust it under the nose of the Indian.

The result was magical, for the chief gave a loud cough and nearly strangled sprung up to a sitting posture.

"Bully for old Lucifer!" yelled Charlie, laughing heartily as he danced about the Indian in perfect delight.

CHAPTER VIII.

SEEKING UNWON HONORS.

As Charlie was trudging slowly up a steep hill, within a mile of the Indian village, leading his own pony bearing the two antelopes, and the Indian's mustang with the chief tied firmly upon his back, he saw a horseman at the summit, apparently awaiting his coming.

He felt no dread of him, for he knew he could not be a foe, so near the Indian camp, and supposed that it must be one of the warriors, whom he knew to be constantly watching him.

As he drew nearer an arrow suddenly came whizzing straight at him, and striking him on the head. Charlie Burgess knew no more, while the two ponies, startled by his fall, bounded over him on up the hill, but were suddenly seized and checked by a strong hand.

It was the Panther, and his quick eye had at

once taken in the situation, that Two Face was a prisoner to the daring pale-face boy.

He had known Two Face in the past, before he became a renegade Dog Soldier Sioux from the tribe, and he had fought him often since, and always to get the worst of it.

The boy had captured him, but now he had a chance to avenge himself upon the White Eagle, and take the credit to himself of having been the one to master the great Dog Soldier Sioux.

He could readily hide the body of the pale-face boy, and let it be supposed that he had escaped, while he would turn his pony loose to go where it pleased.

With this determination of gaining a double revenge and unwon honors at the same time, he raised his bow, took deliberate aim and fired full at Charlie Burgess.

The boy dropped without a cry, and confident that his deadly work was done, the Panther hastily caught the two horses.

Upon one, seated calm and dignified, though bound, was Two Face the Dog Soldier Sioux chief.

Upon the other were the two antelopes he had killed.

A goodly prize certainly for the wily Panther, for the antelopes would give him ample food for days, the mustang of Two Face was noted among the different tribes as the fleetest horse on the prairies, and was called The Wind on account of his speed.

Then, too, Two Face was known to possess the best arms the pale-faces could make, while to be the one who had been his slayer, and who carried his scalp, was an honor such as no other warrior of Red Buffalo's band had ever won.

Then, with all this, Panther knew he would have his revenge against the pale-face boy, White Eagle, and the Dog Soldier Sioux, too, and what more could even an Indian want?

His first stroke brought Charlie down, his second caught the mustang, and then he stood gazing at Two Face with hate, which was changed to admiration when he now and then let his eyes fall upon the splendid mustang, which he had so coveted, almost as much as he has the scalp of his rider.

"The Panther is like the coyote, for he hangs on the trail to get the wounded game the wolf has pulled down," said the Dog Soldier Sioux, recognizing his foe, and throwing into his look and words the utmost scorn.

"The pale-face boy is one of the Red Buffalo's people; but he is my foe, and I have killed him," answered Panther, doggedly.

"And the Red Buffalo will kill the Panther," said Two Face, grimly.

"The Red Buffalo will not know it."

"The Two Face will tell him that the Panther deserves not to wear the feathers of a chief, and he will tear from his coward head the bonnet of eagle-plumes and from his neck the claws of the grizzly bear.*

The face of the Panther grew black with rage, while he answered:

*A necklace of grizzly bear claws is worn by a head chief, as a mark of honor and greatness.—THE AUTHOR.

"No, the Red Buffalo shall not know it, for I will kill the Two Face, scalp him, and bear his body to my village, that my people may see him.

"Let him sing his death-song, for my arrow shall pierce his heart."

The brave Dog Soldier Sioux uttered no word, but at once began his death-song, chanting the words in a low, monotonous tone.

Once he glanced into the face of his foe, who stood directly in front of him, an arrow fitted to his bow, and pointed at his breast, while it was drawn back ready to let fly on its deadly errand.

Over the head of the Panther the Dog Soldier Sioux' eyes glanced, and there flashed through them a fiery light, though not a quiver of the stolid, painted face betrayed what he saw in that quick look, and his enemy suspected no wrong.

What the Two Face saw, though, would have sent fear to the Panther's heart had he seen the same sight, for Charlie Burgess was creeping noiselessly upon him, his revolver in hand, and aimed directly at his bitter foe.

The arrow point had glanced on the side of his head, cutting a gash, and for an instant only stunning him.

But Charley had had the good sense to play the game of Two Face, and pretends to be dead, until at last he stole a glance in the direction of the two chiefs and discovered that Panther had his back to him.

Then he determined to act, and promptly.

Rising to his feet, he drew his revolver and rushed upon the Panther.

That Two Face would see him, he knew, and a start might betray his presence; but, with a movement of the Panther, he intended to fire, and Charlie had full confidence in his aim.

He did not wish to kill the chief, for that would get him into trouble he well knew, so he crept on, while Two Face continued his death-chant, as though he did not know his life was certainly to be spared temporarily, and that his intended slayer had better be singing his death-song, for he believed the boy would certainly kill him.

The bound chief sat upon his mustang, from his lips coming the chant; the Panther held his arrow ready to let fly into his heart, and without any more sound than a brave would have made, Charlie Burgess reached his back, raised his hand, as he had done with Two Face, thus giving that red-skin ocular demonstration of how he had been felled, and the heavy muzzle of the revolver came down upon the devoted head of the Sioux, with the remark from Charlie:

"A turn about's fair play, Mr. Panther!"

The shock sent the arrow off, yet not with force enough to drive it into the exposed bosom of Two Face, though it gave him a severe blow, and down upon his face went the Panther.

But his head was harder than that of the Dog Soldier Sioux, for it barely stunned him, and he quickly attempted to rise, when the pistol was thrust at him, and Charlie said sternly:

"You'll get a bullet in your head, Panther, if you don't do as I tell you."

The chief saw that he was entrapped, and by the one he believed he had killed.

A gash on Charlie's head, and the red stain upon his neck and shoulder, proved that his arrow had been well aimed, only it had not struck hard enough.

Half dazed from the hard blow, he made no reply, and Charlie said:

"Now, move for camp."

The Indian hesitated, and Charlie stepped a pace backward, slung the Winchester rifle of the Dog Soldier Sioux around, and leveled it at his enemy, while he continued:

"There are sixteen bullets in this rifle, Panther, and I'll put every one of 'em into you if you don't strike out for the village, or if you attempt to skip away."

"The pale-face boy shall remember this," hissed the Panther.

"I will, I know, for it's a pretty big thing for a boy of my age to do, to take two chiefs into the village as prisoners.

"But come, move on!"

The Panther moved on slowly, while Two Face laughed, in spite of his peril, and leading the two horses, Charlie followed on close behind, and soon after appeared in camp.

The sight was a startling one for the Indians, and they gathered quickly around, while the Red Buffalo asked:

"What has my son the White Eagle done?"

"Brought some game home, Red Buffalo, for I captured the Two Face, and the Panther tried to kill me and take my prisoner, to claim the honor himself.

"Here is his arrow mark," and Charlie showed the wound on his head, while a silence fell upon all, for that a chief should do so great a wrong to one who was as though of his own people was hard to believe.

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE WAR-PATH.

THE Indians, who had assembled around Charlie and his two prisoners, were not long in recognizing two important facts.

First, they knew that the Panther had gotten himself into a very awkward situation, and next, they were convinced that Charlie, or White Eagle, as they called him, had made a most important capture, and one which made the gallant warriors of the tribe hold their heads in shame.

The first thing that Charlie did was to make a report of where he captured the chief of the Dog Soldier Sioux, and suggest that he would not have ventured that near to the village of a hostile people unless he had some of his warriors near, and Red Buffalo at once ordered a hundred of his young men to take the boy's trail back to the spot and reconnoiter for the foe.

Then he called to an under chief and told him to see to it that the Panther was securely bound and placed in the guard tepee, until his case could be tried, and that Two Face should be confined in another prison lodge near by and securely guarded by two warriors.

The two chiefs were led away amid the hooting of the squaws and children, at the Dog Soldier Sioux captive, and Red Buffalo, proud as a peacock at the exploits of his adopted son,

turned his longing eyes upon the superb mustang, saddle, bridle, rifle and pistol of the Two Face.

Charlie saw the look, but professed to misunderstand it, and generously handed to his adopted parent the old revolver he had kept hidden, and which was not as good as the weapon of the captive.

But the horse and his equipments, with the rifle and revolver, he made no secret of his intending to keep for himself.

Red Buffalo grunted, but accepted the pistol, and seeing that he was not wholly satisfied, Charlie directed his attention to the two antelope, and suggested, as he did not care for scalps, his adopted parent might have the scalp of Two Face when that worthy was killed.

Red Buffalo was too proud of his pale-face boy *protege* to grumble with him, for he already saw promise in him of becoming the greatest of chiefs, so he told him to put away his horses, and come to the tepee for a talk.

Charlie gave the antelope to Fire Eyes, who was immensely tickled with them, and then lariatied his new captive and his pony out, taking his saddle and bridle with him to the wigwam, for fear of accidents.

The Red Buffalo was there awaiting him, and after a few moments of silence, he said:

"My son, the White Eagle, is a great brave."

"Yes," answered Charlie, at a loss what else to say, and not caring to dispute the words of the old chief.

"He will be a great chief."

"Yes."

"He saved my warriors on the river, many moons ago."

"Yes."

"He saved the Red Buffalo from death."

Charlie grunted assent.

"The White Eagle has captured the great chief of the Dog Soldier Sioux."

"Yes."

"He is but a boy."

Charlie could not deny this fact.

"He will wear his scalp at his belt."

"No."

And Charlie declined this honor, and Red Buffalo hinted that he would wear it for him.

"He has a horse that goes like the wind."

"Yes; the Two Face calls his horse 'The Wind.'"

Red Buffalo seemed pleased, and continued:

"Now let the White Eagle tell of his meeting with the Panther."

Charlie gave a clear statement of facts, and the old chief's brow grew black with anger.

"The Two Face saw this?" he asked.

"He did."

"I will talk with him, and then call my warriors to council," and Red Buffalo arose and left the tepee.

In about an hour he returned, and said:

"My son, the White Eagle has a tongue that is straight, for the Two Face, though the foe of our people, talks as he does, and the Panther will go to the medicine lodge for the chiefs to say what shall be done with him."

"I guess the old man Panther will give me no more trouble," muttered Charlie to himself.

"But I'll have to look out for the Panther cubs, for they don't love me, I know, and will think less of me after this."

Just then up dashed two Indian couriers and reported that the band of Two Face had been trailed to a prairie beyond the hills, where they were hunting buffalo, and had a camp of two hundred warriors.

Instantly old Red Buffalo determined to attack them, and called out two hundred of his braves, for he had a large force then stationed near the Dog Soldier camp waiting for reinforcements.

This was a chance for Charlie to see an Indian battle he did not care to miss, he told Red Buffalo, and he was told to get ready for the war-path at once, and that the young bucks who had been in the warrior graduating-class with him should be placed in a special band under his command.

Charlie was more than pleased, and he hoped that the two bands might turn out like the Killenny cats, while he felt convinced he could do good service with his unrivaled Winchester.

He looked over the stock of ammunition of Two Face, got all together, saddled The Wind, and reported ready for the war-path.

The warriors rode out of the village in high feather, for they hoped to come back loaded with scalps and firearms, for it was known that the Dog Soldier Sioux were mostly all armed with rifles or pistols, and that their horses were the very best to be found upon the prairie.

Then, too, the Indian scouts reported that the Dog Soldiers had been hunting buffalo and other game in that vicinity for several days, according to the signs, but had remained undiscovered by the Sioux on account of their not expecting an enemy would be found in their hunting-grounds.

It was night when Red Buffalo and his braves left the village; but they moved on at a slow trot, and a couple of hours brought them to where their comrades awaited them, and they reported the Dog Soldiers still in camp, but evidently excited at the disappearance of their chief, for runners had started out in different directions, two of which had come right into the trap set for them by their foes.

The entire band then moved on to the attack, and at last came in sight of the camp-fires of their foes.

Their position was well chosen, upon a slight eminence, well wooded, and with open prairie all around them.

But Red Buffalo determined to move slowly forward until discovered, and then charge, for he cared not to dismount his warriors, not knowing the exact force of the Dog Soldiers.

This decision being arrived at, the entire band stretched forth in a long line, four feet deep, and went at a slow walk toward the timber, in which were their foes.

Like grim, black phantoms, they drew nearer and nearer, until suddenly, out of the long grass ahead, came a flash and report, and a warrior fell dead.

It was a shot from one of the pickets, and it told the story of an expected attack.

Then, with ringing war-cries, the red horsemen of the Sioux chief dashed to the attack at

full speed, sending showers of arrows before them into the timber, and now and then a bullet, for a few of the braves had muskets.

But above the yells and the tramp of hoofs was heard the rattle of Charlie's Winchester, as he poured an incessant fire into the camp, while his mustang sped ahead of all others in the charge.

Surprised though they were, the Dog Soldiers rallied quickly to the defense, and the discharge of their fire arms told heavily upon their foes.

But nothing could withstand the terrific onslaught of this terrible cavalcade, and the Sioux reached the timber, dashed into it, and then began a hand-to-hand conflict of the most savage nature. Charlie's heart almost failed him at the sickening sights he witnessed, which recalled to him the red scene he could never forget, that night when he became a captive to foes who would show no mercy to white or red face.

A short half-hour of shots, demoniacal yells, shrieks, the neighing of steeds, tramping of hoofs, and the whizzing of arrows, mingled in one grand chorus of sounds, and the battle had ended, with Red Buffalo and his warriors in possession of the camp of their foes, who were retreating as rapidly as possible, leaving behind them many dead and dying and the result of their hunt for several days, which was to be taken to their camp for winter stores.

CHAPTER X.

INDIAN JUSTICE.

BACK from their victory went the tired warriors of Red Buffalo the day following after the night of battle, and they carried with them many scalps, and two score ponies, laden down with game cured for use by their foes.

Some score of warriors had been able to supply themselves with either rifles, muskets or pistols, and these few were delighted above all things, for to them fire-arms were treasures almost beyond the hope of ever obtaining.

Through the entire fight the rapid flashing of Charlie's rifle could be seen by both friends and foes, and mounted upon the mustang of Two Face, with the rifle of the chief also to tell the story, the Dog Soldier Sioux knew that their dearly-loved chief was either dead or a prisoner to their enemies.

Hence Charlie became an object of determined attack from the enemy, and several times he nearly lost his life, and was saved once, when mounted by Dog Soldiers, by a determined charge of old Red Buffalo himself, who, not wishing either the boy, or the mustang, killed, sent his adopted son to the rear with some captured ponies.

The arrival of the band in the village, was a scene that Charlie Burgess says he will never forget to his dying day, for the shouting, howling, war-whooping, wailing, crying of children and barking of the thousand and one dogs, ever to be found about an Indian camp, made up a pandemonium no one would care to witness more than once.

But, upon the principle that "in Rome, do as the Romans do," Charlie war-whooped too until he was hoarse, and then sought his bear-skin couch to get the rest he so much needed.

In spite of the turmoil that went on in the village, it was late the next day before Charlie awoke, and he was glad to find that Fire Eyes had a good meal prepared for him, and had not been too much taken up with the hubbub in camp to forget him.

"The Red Buffalo would see the White Eagle at the Council Lodge," said Fire Eyes, and Charlie, after his substantial breakfast, wended his way to that most important place in an Indian village.

He found upon all sides of him the great excitement still, for some were mourning their dead, others were sorrowing for their wounded kindred, and still more were making merry over the scalps which had been taken, and the meat that had come into their possession.

But about the Council Lodge all was quiet, and a guard pacing before the door proved that a pow-wow was going on within.

The red-skin guard, a dignified brave, admitted Charlie without a word, and the boy found a most serious party within.

Red Buffalo was the presiding genius, several medicine chiefs sat upon each side of him, and then came a double circle of warriors, in the center of which stood the Panther.

Then Charlie knew at a glance what it was all about, and that his intended murderer was being tried.

For the Panther to have killed in cold blood a score of pale-faces, or red-skins of another tribe, would have been a brave act for him to perform, even had some of them been women; but for him to deliberately attempt to murder a warrior of his own tribe, even though that warrior was a pale-face boy, and to steal from him the honor he had won in capturing a dreaded foe, was an act which Indian morals, and the code of right and wrong could not allow to go unpunished.

Upon the entrance of Charlie a place was made for him, and Red Buffalo bade him tell to the assembled braves all that had occurred between himself and the Panther.

In Sioux, as pure as the Indians themselves could speak it, Charlie told his story without any circumlocution.

"The Two Face has spoken with the same straight tongue," said Red Buffalo, when Charlie had ceased speaking.

A silence fell upon all then, and after a while the Red Buffalo asked:

"Has the White Eagle spoken with a crooked tongue, Panther?"

"The White Eagle has spoken straight."

"Let my brother warriors do their worst, and the Panther will show them how to die," was the pompous reply.

"Then the Panther must die, and when two suns have set, with the third sun the Panther shall die, and he shall be bound to a stake, and the White Eagle shall drive his knife to his heart."

Charlie started at this, yet he dared utter no word then, and the Red Buffalo continued:

"Let my warriors speak, if their chief has not said well."

A dead silence fell upon all, and not a dissenting voice was raised, greatly to the regret of poor Charlie, who knew well that he must

carry out the fiat of Indian justice, and his whole nature shrunk from committing so fell a deed.

"I'll skip, that's what I'll do," he muttered as he left the lodge, and as he returned to his tepee he was plotting his best way of escape, for, though he could get away from the village easy enough, to find his way across the trackless prairies to the settlements was the rub, and he had before this made up his mind to bide his chance until the Sioux made a raid toward the forts or ranches, and then leave them.

CHAPTER XI.

AN INDIAN GIRL'S PLOT.

To ponder over the best way to escape from the village, with a prospect of its successful accomplishment, or to escape from having to drive a knife into the heart of the Panther, Charlie Burgess strolled off into the woods alone, and threw himself down in a shady nook to think out some plan of action.

That the Panther would gladly kill him under circumstances of a similar nature, Charlie Burgess well knew; but that did not help the matter any as far as he was concerned.

His nature revolted at the thought, for, though he had seen many wild and barbarous things done, during the year he had now been with the red-skins, he yet would not lend himself to any act of cruelty.

His brain, his form, his heart had all greatly matured during his strange and eventful life among his red-skin foes, and he felt capable of thinking as a man, whose deeds he had more than once performed, and he was determined not to take the life of the Panther in cold blood.

"He deserves killing, but I can't do it, and I won't," he said, firmly.

"Now, if it was to fight him," he continued, "that would be different; but just now I think too much of my parents, and all at home, to let old Panther kill Charlie Burgess, and I don't wish to take the chances of a fight with him."

Without arriving at any definite conclusion as to what to do, Charlie was about to rise and move on, when he suddenly saw a young Indian girl coming along the trail.

She was alone, and Charlie recognized her at once.

It was Light Heart, the young daughter of the condemned chief.

She was a pretty Indian, as far as beauty among Indians goes, and about the age of Charlie, and the only one, he remembered, of the large family of Panthers, that had ever treated him kindly.

She had seemed to feel that he had done right in giving her brother a good thrashing, and with her own hands had replaced on Red Buffalo's wood-pile the fagots which he had decamped with.

Another act of the Light Heart was to make Charlie a pair of leggings and hunting-shirt of the finest dressed buckskin, which her own hands had worked with quills and beads.

She had tied the bundle around Charlie's mustang's neck, but he knew who was the donor, and appreciated the gift so much that he accepted it, and in return left at a spot where

she could find them, the skins of animals he had trapped or shot, with the wings of birds, and other things he thought she might like.

The two had never spoken together, and yet between them had sprung up real friendship, which upon the part of the Indian girl might ripen into love as she grew older; but with the boy it was only a friendly regard, for Charlie had a little sweetheart way back on the Platte river, whom he often thought of, and wondered if she had forgotten him, or believed him dead.

As Light Heart came near the spot where Charlie lay bidden in the bushes, she halted, and glanced timidly around her.

Then she moved forward a few steps in the direction from whence she had come, and again came to a halt, and Charlie beheld her brother, the one he had so thoroughly thrashed, coming to meet her.

Since the licking Little Panther had had no use for White Eagle, and, with his father, he had only bided his time for revenge.

It did not take Charlie long to discover that the brother and sister had come to that lonely spot for a secret talk, fearing to be seen talking together elsewhere, as it might draw suspicion upon them, while upon account of the younger papposes they dared not seek the tepee for a chat.

The pale-face boy imagined too what would be the nature of their conversation, and he was not mistaken, for Little Panther asked, as he joined his sister:

"Has the Light Heart a plan to save our father?"

"Yes, and the Little Panther shall hear," was the subdued answer, but Charlie heard the words distinctly.

"The Little Panther hears," answered the youth, and the Indian girl continued:

"The great Medicine Chief, Death-Killer, has hair and beard like the snow, and he is no taller than is the Little Panther.

"The Death-Killer has power to see the chief, our father, at all times, and to-night, when the village is still, let the Panther seek this spot, and in yonder hollow tree he will find a buckskin robe, a staff, and long hair like the snow to hide his young face and form.

"The voice of the Medicine Chief is weak with age, and like a squaw's, and the Little Panther can mock the tones of the Death-Killer.

"Then let him seem to walk with the trembling feet of age, and seek the medicine lodge, where our father is confined, and he can kill the Black Arrow, who will be his guard, and let the Panther escape."

It was decidedly a bold and well laid plan, but Little Panther did not seem to take to it kindly.

He seemed to recall the fact that his father had given him many a well-deserved licking, and that if that father was dead, he would not perhaps deserve the lickings, or at least, wouldn't get them.

He didn't wish his father to die exactly, and he did not wish to die, in order to let his father live.

The fact is, Little Panther lacked in real Indian grit.

This Light Heart seemed to feel, for she said:

"Will the Little Panther refuse?"

"Little Panther might not kill the guard, an alarm would be given, and he would go to the Happy Hunting Grounds along with the Panther."

This was logic, but it wasn't filial regard in the eyes of the Indian girl, and she said hoarsely:

"Little Panther is a squaw Indian."

The youth seemed to consent to this by his silence, and Light Heart continued:

"As Little Panther is a squaw Indian, Light Heart will save her father."

"Light Heart is a pappoose," sneered her brother.

"She is not a coward," was the reply in a stinging tone.

"She better let him alone, or there'll be a row, for he's just the Injun to fight a girl," muttered Charlie, who was a most interested listener to all that was said.

But having giving her brother this last sentiment to ponder over, Light Heart walked away without another word, and apparently disgusted.

For some time Little Panther stood where she left him, and then he too walked back toward the village, and Charlie arose from his ambush and sought the hollow tree indicated by Light Heart.

He drew out a robe, just such an one as he knew the old Medicine Chief Death-Killer to wear, and found a crooked staff, and a rude wig of snow-white hair.

"She's cut this hair off of the head of the old squaw who died and was buried yesterday," said Charlie, and he added:

"That's a brave girl, for she had to dig the old woman up to get it."

"Well, I'll not let the Light Heart risk her life, but will do the work myself and save her father, and then I won't have to kill him."

Back into their receptacle the boy placed the disguise, and then making up his mind that he would come there at night, rig up as old Death-Killer, and carry out the plot of Light Heart, Charlie returned to the village well satisfied, for the Indian girl had shown him a way out of his difficulty of being forced to stab Panther to death.

CHAPTER XII.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

WHEN the shadows of night fell upon the earth, Charlie went to his tepee, which stood next to that of his adopted parents, and made a roll of his blankets and buffalo and bear skins, to represent himself as having retired for the night.

He also dropped the skin curtain of his lodge, for the nights were getting chilly, and then slipped away toward the woods.

The camp became quiet at an earlier hour than usual that night, for the howling gangs of Indians had worn themselves out body and soul with excitement, and were glad to seek rest, so that the village seemed deserted long before midnight.

Seeking the spot where the disguise was hidden, Charlie soon drew it forth, and at once set to work to rig himself up in it.

He had already skillfully painted his face, until he muttered to himself, when looking in a piece of mirror, before leaving his tepee, that he "looked as old as Methuselah."

The robe he wrapped about him in the most approved style of medicine-men, and the white hair he placed over his own black locks, and let fall on each side of his face, as the Death-Killer was wont to make his toilet.

Then the bonnet of the Medicine Chief was put on, if not artistically, in such a way as to complete the disguise, and seizing the staff, Charlie set off at a step that was the very counterpart of old Death-Killer's rheumatic gait.

Hardly had he taken a dozen steps before he halted suddenly, as did also a person who had come upon him unexpectedly.

A glance was sufficient to show Charlie that it was Light Heart before him, and wishing to test the thoroughness of his disguise, the boy asked, in the squeaking voice of very old age, for he was a perfect mimic:

"Where does the Light Heart go in these woods by night?"

Light Heart seemed taken aback, for she had suddenly come face to face with the very old man, as she believed, whom she was going to impersonate, and she thought she saw all of her plot fall through.

But she said, softly:

"The Light Heart is sad, and she seeks darkness, for such is in her heart."

"Will the great Medicine Chief let her pass on her way?"

Charlie laughed, and the young girl knew then that it was not the Death-Killer, and supposing it to be Little Panther, her brother, who had decided to carry out her plot, she said, quickly:

"Little Panther has not then a squaw's heart."

"I guess he has, Light Heart, for I am not Little Panther."

The Indian girl started, glanced quickly into the face before her, and frightened, seemed about to bound away in flight, when Charlie said:

"Stay, Light Heart, for I am the White Eagle, and hearing what was said to the Little Panther, I came to take his place."

"The White Eagle talks strange, for he is to kill the Panther, not to save him," groaned the girl, believing that all was lost.

"The White Eagle is a boy, Light Heart, but he strikes no foe who is a prisoner and bound."

"He will set the Panther free."

"The White Eagle will do this?" she cried, eagerly.

"Yes, but the Light Heart must tell no one, and she must go to her tepee, so that she will not be suspected."

"But harm may come to the White Eagle."

"No, he will make no mistake."

"Let the Light Heart trust him, for his tongue is not crooked."

The girl was silent an instant, and then said, slowly:

"Let the White Eagle tell the Panther that

his mustang awaits him at the Willow Spring toward the setting sun, and that his weapons are also there, and food for his journey.

"Let him fly to the Dog Soldier Sioux, for there he will be safe."

"The White Eagle will tell him the words of the Light Heart," answered Charlie.

The girl said no more, but reaching forth her hand, grasped that of the boy, who, not liking thanks, and feeling that he was serving himself more than the Light Heart, in rescuing her father, at once turned away and walked at his well-assumed gait toward the village.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHITE EAGLE'S BOLD DEED.

CHARLIE, as I have said, had become strangely matured during his life among the Indians.

From a mere baby, almost, he had been taught by his good parents to rely upon himself, and they had so trained his younger years that he had the promise of becoming all that was noble as a man.

He was fond of fun, loved daring sports for the excitement they brought, but withal had a love of kindred and home, which, when he lost all, the blow fell heavily upon his heart, and set him to thinking deeply.

He was, therefore, in his fifteenth year, a man in thought, and his nerve was wonderful.

Strong as a young lion, wiry as an eel, with pluck that dared anything, and nerve that never failed, he had entered upon his bold undertaking with confidence in himself.

He had felt sorry for Light Heart when her brother left the work for her to do; but had he not been helping himself out of the difficulty of having to deliberately murder the Panther, though ordered by Indian law, he would have made no effort to save him, for Charlie had no sympathy for his red foe.

The danger he ran in crossing the village to the guard tepee he well knew, for he did not deem it impossible to meet with old Death-Killer himself, who was a night prowler about the camps.

This idea struck him as ludicrous, and he laughed lightly over it, while he said to himself:

"I guess the old man would think he saw his own ghost, and get cured of his rheumatism."

Then, too, the guard might recognize the deception and betray him.

The plan of Light Heart to kill the Indian guard, Charlie never for an instant entertained, for that would be as bad as driving a knife to the heart of the Panther, and in fact far worse, for the old chief had tried to slay him and the other had never done him any wrong.

Across the village the pretended Medicine Chief hobbled, and wended his steps to the guard tepee.

The Indian on guard duty met him in front of the lodge, and spoke in a respectful tone to him, for the red-skins have an awe for their Medicine Chiefs which in many cases amounts to a holy horror.

The guard was Running Elk, a warrior whom Charlie knew well, and a shrewd and bold Indian.

"The Running Elk stands over the Panther?" he said, in his feigned tones.

"The Running Elk obeys his chiefs," was the reply of the warrior.

"The Running Elk is a great warrior, and will one day be a chief himself; but the Medicine Chief has come to bind about the head of the Panther the red buckskin, as the symbol of death."

Charlie said this in his squeaking tones, and the warrior replied:

"Does the Death-Killer forget that this is not the last darkness the Panther shall see?"

"No, the Death-Killer knows that the Panther has two more suns, and one more darkness to see; but the Medicine Chief comes now, for he has no other time."

"The mighty Medicine Chief knows."

"The Running Elk has spoken, for the Medicine Chief does know."

"But the Death-Killer has dropped the red buckskin," and Charlie fumbled about his clothes as though looking for it.

"He came from the Rock Glen, and has dropped it."

"The Death-Killer is old, his feet are weary, so let the Running Elk go back on the trail and find the red buckskin for the Medicine Chief."

"The Running Elk will go," said the warrior, glad to leave the Medicine Chief, and he started upon the back trail, as Charlie directed him.

But no sooner was he out of sight than Charlie darted into the tepee.

He at first intended to tell the Panther who he was, but then remembered that perhaps the stubborn Indian would refuse to escape, and thereby dishonor himself more than he had done, so, checking the intention he hobbled forward and said in the same quivering voice:

"The Panther is here!"

"Yes, mighty Medicine Chief," answered the deep tones of the Indian, who had heard the conversation without, and knew who the visitor was he saw indistinctly in the gloom of the tepee.

"Let the Panther obey the Death-Killer, and fly from his people to the village of the Dog Soldier Sioux, and there will his children follow him."

"The Death-Killer will cut his bonds, and bid him go to the Willow Spring, where his mustang and arms await him."

"Quick! let him depart, for he is without honor among his own people, and the Great Spirit wishes him not to go yet to the Happy Hunting Grounds."

As Charlie spoke he severed the stout thongs that bound the chief's hands and feet, and, not for a moment doubting but that the Death-Killer stood before him, and taught ever to obey the Medicine Chief, the Panther staggered to his feet, stretched himself to start the blood in circulation through his benumbed limbs, and bounded from the tepee.

Back to his post outside went Charlie, and soon the Running Elk appeared in sight, and approaching, said that he had been unable to find the red buckskin.

"The Death-Killer will go for it," said Charlie, and he hobbled away, until out of sight of the tepee, and then off came his disguise, and it was hung upon the staff he had walked with, to be found the next morning and be a proof that

the Running Elk had been cleverly deceived.

Just as Charlie crept into his tepee, and before he could lie down to sleep, Red Buffalo called him to come to him.

With dread at his heart he obeyed, thrusting his trusty revolver into his belt, and the chief said:

"The Medicine Chief, Death-Killer is gone to the Happy Hunting Grounds."

Charlie started, but made no reply, though he dreaded that Light Heart had done the deed.

Together with Red Buffalo he went to the tepee of the Medicine Chief, and there beheld the Death-Killer.

He lay upon his bed of skins, seemingly asleep; but the squaw who acted as his servant, had said that he had called to her only a short while before and told her that he was dying, and ere she could call any one he was dead, and she had hastened to the Buffalo.

"The old man seemed to want to help us," muttered Charlie, and he hastened away to secure the staff, robe and hair he had left in the main part of the village.

They were still there, and going to the secluded spot in the timber, he hid them once more in the hollow tree to lie there, as he believed, forever.

"Now old Death-Killer will have to take the blame of setting the Panther free," said Charlie as he retraced his steps to his tepee.

Returning to his bed he sought sleep; but at an early hour was awakened by howling and wailing from one end of the village to the other.

The sudden death of the Medicine Chief had been discovered, and also the escape of the Panther, and it was found that Light Heart had fled with him, for there were the trails of two mustangs leading away from the Willow Spring and the young girl could nowhere be found, and Little Panther could tell nothing about her, or at least said so.

The wailing was for the Death-Killer's demise, and the howling for the escape of the Panther, and between the two sleep was driven from Charlie's eyes, and he set forth to see what was thought of the whole affair.

CHAPTER XIV.

CHARLIE'S PLOT.

THE excitement in the Indian village was intense, for all loved the old Medicine Chief greatly, and had looked upon him as a fixture for all time to come in their midst.

His sudden taking off, however, had caused them to remember how very old he was, and that it was at least time for him to die, and that he had really clung on pretty well, considering the accidents liable to occur in Indian life.

Mingled with sorrow at his death was a regret that he had seen fit to use his power to set free so arch a villain as their second chief, who had tried to take honors he had not won.

The Panther had never been popular, and only his real courage or luck in battle had won for him his prominence, and therefore when he had fallen from grace, all wished to see him punished.

Scouts had been put at once upon his trail, as

soon as Running Elk had told his story of the visit of Death-Killer, the losing of the red buckskin, and his search for it.

Had it not been for the cut bonds of the prisoner it might have been believed that he had himself gotten away, but the severed thongs proved that he had been set free, and who could have aided him but Death-Killer in the absence of the guard, and all remembered that the fugitive chief and Medicine Chief had always been friends.

That Light Heart should have gone too, greatly elated a number of young girls who were envious of her beauty, while it depressed many youthful braves and aspirants for warriorhood, who had begun to cast loving glances at the fair maid, although she had barely entered her teens.

All this time Charlie wandered about, an interested observer of things.

He saw the half-hundred well-mounted scouts start in pursuit of the Panther, but said nothing.

He could have told secrets that would have set the village wild, but he wisely held his peace.

As for Little Panther, he looked gloomy indeed.

Had he known that his sister intended to cast her fortunes with her father he would gladly have gone too, for he well could see that there were no hearts yearning for his presence in the village, as the sins of the old Panther were being visited upon the cub.

He knew he had not proven himself a shining light in the Indian community, and at heart an arrant coward, he feared that trouble to himself might follow.

With malignity he glanced at Charlie as the two met, and the pale-face boy returned the look with an accompaniment he had learned from the stage-drivers of the Overland, and which expressed volumes.

It was simply the placing of his thumb upon his nose and twinkling his fingers.

Little Panther had never met those important personages, the stage-drivers of the Overland, but he could see that the act of Charlie was one of contempt for him, and his heart grew blacker and he swore revenge.

To his regret Charlie, in perambulating about the village, made a most important discovery, to the effect that Two Face was to be *burned at the stake!*

Now the boy had rather taken a fancy to the Dog Soldier Sioux.

He liked his nerve, his indifference to his fate, and had heard of his innumerable exploits of daring.

He could have told the Panther upon him, when he was creeping upon that worthy from behind, but had wisely held his peace, and continued chanting his death-song, as though he rather enjoyed it.

He had captured Two Face, and would have shot him, as he would like to see many other bad Indians shot, but the thought that he was to die so fearful a death horrified him.

He had witnessed many cruelties among the Indians, but this was to be the crowning one; and as he was the captor of the Dog Soldier

chief, he would be in a measure the cause of his fearful end.

At once he sought his adopted father, whom he found grieving over the death of the Medicine Chief, gloating over the intended burning of Two Face, bewailing the escape of the Panther, and at the same time devouring a huge piece of antelope meat.

"Does the Red Buffalo say that the Two Face must die?" asked Charlie.

"The Red Buffalo says so," was the mumbled reply, for his mouth was full.

"At the stake?"

The Red Buffalo had bitten off another huge chunk and not able to articulate, he nodded.

"When does the Two Face die?"

The chief made signs to indicate on the third night following, and Charlie turned away.

"Two Face is a great villain, but no worse than old Daddy Red Buffalo," he muttered as he sat down to think.

"I might play Good Thunder on the guard, as I did the other Medicine Chief; but Good Thunder is a big man, and while I was waiting to grow Two Face would be called for.

"If I thought Two Face would guide me to the settlements, I would go with him; but I guess it would be out of the frying-pan into the fire, if the Dog Soldiers got me.

"But I must get him off in some way, for I will not see him burnt at the stake."

And thus Charlie sat and pondered, until at last his face lighted up, and he laughed aloud, for he had hit upon a plan and one that amused him in spite of the danger in carrying it out.

Knowing that duty compelled him to go to the burial of the old Medicine Chief, Charlie went forth in full feather, and saw the Death-Killer, who, in this last case had been worsted by Death, placed away in the Indian burying-ground.

It was a grand and solemn affair, and the entire village was there, even Two Face being dragged to the burial by his warrior guard, who preferred to take him along than to miss the scene of pomp.

Charlie looked on quietly, howled when the others howled, and turned his steps homeward with a quiet smile upon his face.

And once more a rest came upon the Indian village, and all appeared to be sleeping the sleep of utter prostration long before midnight came around.

But there were three in that red-skin camp who were wide awake.

They were Two Face, his guard, and Charlie Burgess.

CHAPTER XV.

A GHOST IN THE INDIAN VILLAGE.

THE guard who had charge of Two Face, the Dog Soldier Sioux, who was to go up in flame to the Happy Hunting Grounds, according to the decision of the Red Buffalo and his chiefs, was a young brave, but one who had taken his scalps on several occasions.

He had been selected by Red Buffalo as especially fitted to guard the prisoner, for he had never been known to sleep on his post, and he was rapidly rising to fame in his tribe.

He answered to the name of Fighting Snake, and there is no doubt but that he deserved the cognomen, for he was snaky in character, and ever ready for a fight by nature, and those who knew him well looked upon him as a hero of the Indian kind of heroism.

Wide awake, and meditating upon the joy of soon seeing the Dog Soldier prisoner roasted to a turn, Fighting Snake stood at his post of duty, and Two Face lay within the tepee suffering from the tight thongs about his ankles and wrists.

His hands were tied behind his back, his feet bent backward and upward, and made fast to his wrists, and there he lay upon his side unable to move, and knowing the torture that awaited him in two more nights.

Suddenly Fighting Snake halted in his monotonous walk, and peered into the darkness ahead of him.

His quick eyes had caught sight of a form approaching.

It was evident that the object of the approaching person was the guard tent; but he came along slowly, and was watched by the guard with a look that soon became a stare, and then a riveted gaze of horror.

Nearer and nearer the form approached, and then Fighting Snake seemed about to dash away in flight and fright combined.

But he called up all his courage and still stood his ground, though he trembled violently, and could not fit the arrow-head to the string of the bow he held in his hand.

What he beheld in the gloom of night was a form he knew but too well, and his superstitious horror none could blame, for within half a dozen paces of him was the Medicine Chief, *Death-Killer*.

No, he knew it could not be the chief himself, for he had seen him buried that very day; but it was certainly his spirit come back from the Happy Hunting Grounds, if it had had time to get there, and he had evidently returned to say that all was not well in the Indian village, for what else could have brought him?

Fighting Snake was exceedingly sorry that he was the guard of Two Face at that moment, and had he possessed a less stout heart, he would have skedaddled in the most approved style.

But he would not desert his post, even if a ghost came, and there he stood.

Right close up came the supposed spirit, and then in hollow tones were uttered the words:

"The Great Spirit is angry with Fighting Snake and his people."

"What has the Fighting Snake and his people done to anger the Great Spirit, mighty Medicine Chief?" asked the trembling red-skin.

"They hold prisoner a foe, the Two Face of the Dog Soldier Sioux, who has work to do yet which the Great Spirit commands him to do."

"Let the Fighting Snake behold what the Great Spirit has sent the Death Killer to do."

Into the tepee swept the supposed ghost, and the Indian shrunk away from his path.

Bending over the Two Face he severed his bonds, while he chanted in a low tone some words in a foreign tongue to both the prisoner and his guard, but which Charlie Burgess had

learned in early childhood under the name of *gibberish*.

"Now, let the Two Face seek the spot where the White Eagle captured the Panther, and he will find there a horse and arms awaiting him, for I set him free," said Charlie, in English, which he knew that the Dog Soldier Chief understood, and that Fighting Snake did not.

Two Face had thought that it was a pretty lively ghost that was handling the knife so skillfully upon his bonds, and he started visibly when he knew who his rescuer was.

But he uttered no word, and rising to his feet walked forth from the tepee in all freedom, Fighting Snake making no movement to stop him.

"Now, let the Fighting Snake remain here until yonder star goes down behind the mountain.

"Then let him seek the Red Buffalo, and tell him what the Great Spirit has ordered the Death-Killer to do.

"Let him tell the Red Buffalo that there is trouble ahead for his people.

"The Medicine Chief has spoken."

Slowly the supposed spirit glided away, and when, two hours after, when the star set behind the hills, and Fighting Snake sought the tepee of Red Buffalo, Charlie came in to hear the startling news, and looked as innocent as though he had not been the supposed ghost of the Medicine Chief Death-Killer.

CHAPTER XVI.

LITTLE PANTHER SEEKS REVENGE.

WHEN it was reported the next morning, the remarkable visitation which Fighting Snake had had, the village was in an uproar, and all, even to old Red Buffalo, dreaded the warning.

Charlie went quietly about, enjoying the rum-pus he had created, and which so impressed his adopted father, that he ordered his warriors not to follow upon the trail of the Dog Soldier Sioux, for fear it would anger the Great Spirit.

This order set Charlie to thinking, that as the Two Face was not to be followed, it would be a good idea for him to strike his trail and keep on it until he was near enough to the settlements to depend upon himself to find his way thither.

But there was one drawback in the way, and that was that the band of warriors sent after the Panther and his daughter, had not yet returned, and he might run upon them or they upon him.

But as this trouble was revolving itself in his mind, and how best to avoid it, the band of pursuers returned, their ponies jaded out, and the riders having had a hard, but unsuccessful chase of it for the Panther and Light Heart had escaped.

Then Charlie determined to act, for he saw no better time for making his escape.

He had been a captive over a year, and had gone on so many hunts alone and returned, that of late no one seemed to watch him.

So he would simply tell the Red Buffalo he would go off on a couple of days' hunt for game, and he promised himself that he would never again look upon the Indian village, where he had so long worn the galling chains of captivity.

He at once set about getting his traps together, and as soon as it was dark carried a few of his best robes and little things he had gotten together to a spot some distance from the village, and which was near his scene with the Panther, when Two Face was his prisoner.

His fleet pony, which Red Buffalo had given him, was also ridden to the spot and lariatied out to await his coming.

Then he returned to his tepee, carefully cleaned his weapons, and told Red Buffalo that he intended to make an early start in the morning upon his hunt, and would retire.

The old chief knew that Charlie's going on a hunt meant good game food for several days after his return, and was glad to see him go, little dreaming that the pale-face boy was striking out boldly for freedom.

As soon as Fire Eyes turned in for the night, Charlie made a raid upon the edibles to be found in the larder, and then quietly left his tepee.

Going to the corral where the horses were kept, he saddled and bridled the splendid animal he had captured from Two Face, and mounting rode away, his belt of arms on, his Winchester at his back.

Without one regret he left the spot that so long had been his home, for not a single friendship had he formed for one of the tribe, whom he looked upon as the murderers of his brother Eddie, and the good people they had been visiting at the time of the Indian attack.

Arriving at the spot where he had hidden his pony and his traps, he dismounted, and began to prepare for his daring venture.

He had made for himself a pack-saddle of hides, and this he strapped firmly upon the back of the pony, and packed into it his traps, robes and provisions, little dreaming the while that two pairs of eyes were watching his every movement.

At last the pony was ready, and he was just taking the lariat end in his hand to lead him by, and preparing to mount, when there came a whirring sound in the air, and the coil of a lasso dropped over him.

Involuntarily Charlie had thrown up his hand at the sound, and over this the coil had dropped, and thus his neck had escaped the noose by his lightning-like movement.

But it had tightened around his arm, and yielding, he had allowed himself to be drawn downward, and apparently fell heavily.

Then from the brush near by sprung two forms, and they bounded upon the youth, believing the noose to be around his neck and choking him.

But suddenly up rose Charlie to a sitting posture, his hand was thrust forward, and a flash and report followed, and down went an Indian in his tracks.

The other form suddenly halted, and in piteous tones cried:

"The White Eagle will not kill his young brother."

"Little Panther, as I live!" exclaimed Charlie, in surprise, and quickly he sprung toward him, and with the lasso that had been intended to capture him, he bound him securely and then asked:

"Who is that warrior?" pointing to the one he had shot.

"The Fighting Snake."

"Ahl and you evidently spied out what I was doing and got him to help you capture me?"

"The White Eagle speaks straight; but he will not kill the Little Panther," whined the cowardly youth.

"I ought to do so, but I won't, if you do as I tell you."

"Have you your pony here?"

The Indian grunted assent.

"And the Fighting Snake's mustang?"

Little Panther said the warrior's horse was with his pony, hidden over the hillside.

"I am in luck, for Fighting Snake has the best horse in the tribe, excepting The Wind here."

"Now we'll get the horses," and Charlie made the youth lead him to them.

Then he brought them to where Fighting Snake lay, and that warrior was raised to the back of Little Panther's pony, and then strapped there firmly.

Then Charlie ordered Little Panther to mount the really fine animal that had belonged to Fighting Snake, and he was securely tied to his back.

Springing into his own saddle, with the lariats of the three led horses in his hand, Charlie set off at a swift trot.

It had been his intention to have gone only a few miles that night, and then wait until dawn, when he could have struck the trail of the horse of Two Face and followed it.

But the shot might have been heard by some of the Indians prowling about the village, and if not, when the morning came Fighting Snake and Little Panther would certainly be missed and search made for them.

So he determined to press on southward at a pace that would take him many miles away by morning.

Over hill and through valley, across prairies, and fording streams, he went untiringly, holding his course due south, and thus hours passed away.

Still the splendid horse he rode kept up his untiring pace, and the others were forced to follow.

At last Charlie halted, to the great relief of Little Panther, upon the banks of a stream that had the look of being deep.

Quickly he dismounted and unfastened the dead Indian, but left him still hanging across the pony.

Then mounting again he rode into the stream, the other horses following, and the body of the Fighting Snake was borne off by the current, while Charlie remarked grimly:

"I guess they'll not find his body now," meaning those who might follow upon his trail.

The pony of Little Panther, which had been carrying the dead weight of Fighting Snake, had given out, as Charlie expected he would, and therefore he had made him the bearer of the heaviest burden.

Leaving the mustang on the river-bank to go wheresoever he chose, Charlie pressed on at a more rapid pace than before, for his own two

horses and the one ridden by Little Panther, he knew he could depend upon for many a long mile yet ahead of them.

"Where does the White Eagle carry the Little Panther?" asked the Indian boy at last, as he was becoming used up by riding, and suffered from the thongs with which he was tied to the horse.

"I am just giving you a jolly good ride, Little Panther, that is all," was the quiet response, and on still the brave youth pressed until the dawn came and the sun appeared above the prairie horizon.

Then Charlie sought a clump of timber and came to a halt upon the bank of a small stream.

Dismounting he lariatied the horses out to feed, and then freed the Indian boy.

"Now, Little Panther, you wanted to be avenged on me, did you not?"

"The Little Panther hates the White Eagle," was the response.

"That's flat-footed enough, I am sure."

"Well, you saw me leave my tepee with a bundle and followed me?"

The Indian nodded assent.

"You suspected I was up to some trick, and got the aid of the Fighting Snake to help you catch me?"

Silence in this instance on the part of the Indian youth gave consent.

"But Little Panther, you failed, for I killed Fighting Snake, and I am fifty miles from the village of your people, and I have three good horses to carry me on my way, while you will have to walk back to camp."

"When you get back, just tell old Red Buffalo that I have gone home, and that some day we may meet again."

"Here, Little Panther, take your bow and arrows, and this knife of Fighting Snake, and start on the back trail."

"Hold on! you will want something to eat, so here it is, and if you can catch your pony at the river you are welcome to do so for all I care; but before you reach your tribe, I will have a start that will keep me far ahead of your fleetest ponies."

"Good-by, Little Panther, and don't forget White Eagle."

The Indian boy uttered no word against his hard lot, but turned and walked away, following the back trail to his village, while Charlie, with a light laugh, set about discussing his breakfast.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DUEL IN THE TIMBER.

LITTLE PANTHER left the camp of Charlie Burgess utterly crushed in heart and spirit.

He had hated the pale-face boy from the first, because he was not an Indian, and had added largely to that natural hatred when he received such a severe whipping at the hands of the young prisoner.

He had seen him humiliate his father, and long after had seen him come into the village with the Panther a prisoner.

Had it not been for Light Heart, his sister, the Indian youth believed that his father would

ave died by the hand of the young White Eagle.

Dogging his steps he had at last caught him, he thought, in a trap, and too cowardly to go alone he had easily gotten the Fighting Snake to accompany him, telling him that the White Eagle intended to fly from the village.

The result the reader already knows.

But all along through the night ride, worn worn out, suffering from being bound, dreading that he would be slain, Little Panther had suffered fearful agony of mind and body.

When at last the pale-face boy had halted, the Indian youth believed his days had ended.

But when he discovered just what Charlie intended to do with him, his hopes rose high.

It was a long way back to camp, and he was sore and tired then, but anything to suffer was better than death, and off he trudged upon the prairie.

At first he did not look back, but at last he did so, and did not see Charlie.

Then the youth came in view, spread his buffalo robe at the foot of a tree and lay down upon it to sleep.

Little Panther walked slowly on, but his thoughts glided into a strange channel for him.

He knew that he was so sleepy he could hardly keep awake, and, as White Eagle was human, he must feel the same.

If so, when he sunk to sleep, it would be so sound that he could not be easily awakened.

Instantly, then, he decided upon a bold act.

It was to make a quick circuit, gain the timber, creep upon Charlie and send an arrow into his heart.

By so doing he would get three splendid ponies, a scalp, the traps of his enemy and ample revenge.

It was certainly worth trying, and the game was worth the risk, especially as he did not think Charlie would awake, or would have the slightest idea that he would dare to come back to attack him.

Going over a rise in the prairie, Little Panther made a rapid circuit of a mile and entered the timber at another point.

He stopped to rest himself thoroughly after his run; then selected from his quiver his best arrow and fitted it to the bow.

Then he cautiously moved forward through the timber, ready to fire upon the pale-face boy should he have awakened and be moving about.

But he soon caught sight of the form lying upon the buffalo-robe, and with a blanket spread over it.

Nearer and nearer the Indian boy crept, his arrow ready, and he flitted from tree to tree to be ready to take advantage of shelter should Charlie wake up before he got within close range.

Whether it was the presence of danger that caused Charlie to start to his feet he never knew; but suddenly he did so, springing up from a sound sleep and glancing quickly around him.

As he did so he heard a sudden whiz and felt a stinging pain in his arm.

With a bound he sought the oak at the bottom of which he had been lying down, and saw a form dart from one tree to another.

In that quick glance he recognized Little Panther, and shouted:

"Hello! it's you, is it, Panther?"

"Where in the mischief did you get the pluck to come back and fight it out?"

Little Panther knew now that it was his death or Charlie's, and rendered desperate by danger, he watched warily for the slightest advantage.

His tree was a large one, and a scrub growing against it gave him a good shelter.

The tree behind which Charlie was ensconced was about the same size as his, but there was no underbrush near it to hide his head should he glance around the trunk.

Taking advantage of the leaves on the brush at his tree, Little Panther looked around the trunk and saw that Charlie's rifle lay upon the buffalo-robe a yard away from him, and his belt of arms was hanging upon his saddle-horn, which was still further away.

Little Panther gave a yell as he made this discovery, for he felt that Charlie was disarmed, he knew he had wounded him, and matters looked cheering for his success.

He had perfect confidence in his marksmanship, for he was a dead shot, and he had almost made up his mind to run upon his foe, firing as he went, if Charlie exposed himself, and thus end the affair and his fearful suspense.

Just as he had made up his mind to charge upon his foe, Charlie stretched forth his arm for his rifle.

He had wrapped his buckskin jacket and hat about it to protect it from a shot; but the quick eye of Little Panther sent an arrow upon its way like a flash, and Charlie received his second wound.

But he seized the rifle and dragged it to him, an act that made Little Panther cover himself thoroughly in an instant; but his successful shot caused him to give vent to a triumphant war-cry.

"Howl away, you Panther cub; but when I get a shot at you it will be my time to shout," cried Charlie, as he tugged away at the arrow in his arm.

The first one had just gashed his arm above the elbow; but this one had driven itself into the flesh for some distance.

It was a painful wound; but setting his teeth hard, Charlie drew it out and threw it upon the ground just as a third shot came from Little Panther, and glanced upon the stock of his rifle.

But it showed Charlie how careful he must be, and how thoroughly on the alert the Indian was to take any advantage.

"Say, Panther!" he called out.

"What White Eagle want?" quickly answered the Indian, anxious to come to terms, and wishing he had gone on to the village, now that he found he had wakened up the wrong passenger.

"You step out from your tree, as I do from mine, and we'll end this circus."

"White Eagle is a fool," was the reply of the red-skin, who had no idea of taking any chances.

"All right, you look out, for I am after your scalp," shrieked back Charlie, who at once determined upon a ruse to make the Indian show himself.

He took his hat, shoved it into the sleeve of his hunting-shirt, and let it protrude beyond the tree, as though by accident, while he cautiously peeped around the other side.

Instantly an arrow was sent through the sleeve, and Charlie jerked it back, without having caught sight of any part of his foe to draw a bead upon, for the little clump of brush protected him.

Charlie then decided to play another game, and he dragged his blanket to him with his rifle, and an arrow struck the barrel, showing how quick and true was the aim of his watchful foe.

Drawing off his leggings, as well as he could, Charlie soon had the blanket shoved into them and the body and arms of his hunting-shirt, until it looked certainly like a human form.

The end of his buffalo-robe was near his feet, and he managed to get hold of it without a wound, though an arrow buried itself in the tree within an inch of his hand.

Off of the robe he cut a piece, and adjusted it into his hat, which he placed upon the top of his dummy, and in such a way that the buffalo hair looked as though it might be his own.

Having thus rigged out an effigy, Charlie's next act was to get a shot into it, and this he knew could be done only through the treachery of the red-skin.

"How many arrows has the Panther got?" he called out.

"Enough to kill the White Eagle," was the boastful answer.

"The Panther has already wounded the White Eagle twice, so let us be friends now."

"Let White Eagle put down his gun, and Little Panther will be his friend."

"The White Eagle will see if the tongue of the Little Panther is crooked, for he will trust him."

"See!"

As Charlie spoke he thrust the dummy half out from behind the tree, and in such a way that it looked as though he was glancing out really to show his trust in the word of the red-skin.

Instantly an arrow buried itself in the supposed body, which Charlie let fall to the ground, the back toward his foe to keep up the deception.

One glance was sufficient for Little Panther to see what he supposed was his foe lying dead at the foot of the tree, and with a wild yell of triumph he left his cover and sprung toward him.

But suddenly a form almost nude stepped out before him, and he heard the threatening words:

"You killed my photograph, Little Panther, but not 'yours truly,' and now it's my time!"

Little Panther saw that he was fairly caught, and uttered a yell of rage and terror, while he tried to fit another arrow to his bow.

But there came a sharp report, and he sprung high into the air and fell his full length upon the ground, the bullet of Charlie Burgess having gone through his heart.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AN INDIAN GIRL'S DISCOVERY.

SOME four or five days after the duel in the timber between Charlie Burgess and Little Panther, a young Indian girl was riding slowly along through some woodland that fringed the hillsides putting back from a large stream of water.

She was mounted upon a spotted pony, rode with the air of one perfectly at home on horse-back, and was dressed in a most gorgeous costume for an Indian girl.

Very youthful looking, she yet was well developed, and both her face and form were above the red-skin average for symmetry and beauty.

In her hand she held a bow, and at her back was a quiver of arrows, and several being missing therefrom proved that she had found something to fire at, and in fact a wild goose and a couple of ducks hung upon one side of her rude saddle, the latter being of Indian manufacture.

Presently her horse gave a loud snort, and she instantly was upon her guard, her bow ready for use.

Peering up the canyon, where something had evidently attracted the attention of her pony, she saw a horse feeding.

A glance at the animal, and she seemed to recognize it, for she said, speaking in the Sioux tongue:

"It is The Wind, the horse the young White Eagle captured from Two Face."

For a moment she sat in deep meditation, and then she seemed to have decided upon what course to pursue, and rode slowly forward.

The horse she had recognized looked up as she advanced, and gave a low neigh of welcome, and a moment after the Indian girl sprung from the pony's back and ran quickly forward with a low cry.

What she beheld, that caused this move on her part, was a buffalo-robe spread under the shelter of the shelving bank of the canyon, and upon it lay a prostrate human form.

By his side was a pack-saddle, and beyond him up the canyon two more horses were feeding and lariatied out.

The one who lay upon the buffalo-robe was evidently suffering, for his face was flushed, his skin seemed fiery hot, and his eyes rolled wildly in his head, and only for an instant fixed themselves upon the face of the Indian girl with a vacant stare.

The two who were in that lonely canyon were Charlie Burgess, and Light Heart the young daughter of Panther the Sioux chief.

CHAPTER XIX.

WOUNDED, SICK AND ALONE.

AFTER his affair with Little Panther, which ended in the death of the young Indian, Charlie Burgess determined to at once go on his way, for he liked not the spot where he had been forced to kill his foe, for red-skin though he was he felt sorry for him and wished that he had gone on toward the village of his people, instead of returning to meet his fate at his hands.

He dug a shallow grave and gave Little Panther burial, not disturbing the scalp-lock, so highly prized by those with whom he had lived so long, and then mounting his horse continued to push on southward.

Charlie had bound up his wounds as well as he could; but they both gave him pain, and he began to feel wretchedly.

"Could the arrows of the red-skin be poisoned?" was his thought, for other wounds and bruises more serious had not affected him as these did.

At last night came on and he was glad to throw himself down to rest; but at midnight he awoke with intense pain and thirst, and he knew that he had fever.

His camp was a desolate one, and feeling that he was going to be sick, he determined to ride on and try and find some more suitable place.

Again he mounted and pressed on, leading his pony and the animal that had belonged to Fighting Snake, and pressing all three of them hard in his anxious, feverish way.

At last the sun arose and he saw a distant range of hills and thither he wended his way.

Arriving in their shelter he found a small canyon, through the center of which flowed a tiny rivulet, and with quantities of luxuriant grass upon all sides.

His first duty was to his horses, and there he staked out in such a way that they could get feed and water both.

Then he sought a spot, where the sides of the canyon shelved under so as to form a safe retreat from the night air and even from the rain.

His pack-saddle was hastily opened, his robes spread out with his blankets, and his gourd filled with water and placed near him, with his bag of food at hand, should he need aught to eat.

Then he re-dressed his wounds, and found them red and swollen, and they pained him severely.

Charlie hardly knew what sickness was, but now he felt that he was very ill, for his skin was hot, his head ached, and his thoughts seemed to wander at times.

"Oh God! am I to die here, wounded, sick and alone?" he moaned, and almost in despair he dropped back upon his couch of skins, and sunk into a troubled sleep.

And with a still severer clutch the fever seized upon him, his brain seemed on fire, and he raved in delirium.

Now he would call upon his brother Eddie to come and aid him in killing an Indian, and then he would become calm, and seemed to be saying a prayer at the knee of his dearly-loved mother, while he could see his kindly-faced father seated near, waiting to bid him good-night, for he appeared to be a child again.

And thus several days and nights passed away, the dumb brutes staked out near the only witnesses of his sufferings.

But at last chance led the steps of Light Heart by the canyon, and to her amazement she beheld the almost dying boy.

Instantly she set to work to aid him all in her power.

Her father and her mother, too, had been skilled in the use of herbs, and they had taught her what was good in wounds and cases of fever, and such as were used by the medicine-men of their tribe.

Instantly she went into the woods, and soon returned with some pieces of roots and a few bunches of what appeared to be weeds.

Charlie's cooking-pan, which lay near, was at once put into use by being filled with water and having the roots placed therein.

Then a fire was built by the girl, and the medicine set upon it to boil.

While waiting for it Light Heart quickly took the buckskin bandages from the wounded arms, and bathed the wounds most thoroughly, all the time talking in a low, kind tone to the boy sufferer, who at once ceased his ravings.

Parts of her own attire—and which, a desire to tell facts causes me to say, had been stolen by her father upon his raids from some poor white woman, whom perhaps he had killed—were then saturated in the decoction she had prepared and bound upon the wounds in a really skillful manner.

Then the cooking-pan was brought into requisition again, for the weeds to stew in it, and the juice thus obtained she poured into a gourd and gave to Charlie to drink, and was delighted to see that he swallowed it eagerly.

After making him as comfortable as possible, Light Heart changed the lariat stakes of the horses, to where they could get better grass, for they had eaten close all in range of where they had been before, and then mounting her mustang rode away.

After having been so skillfully and kindly treated, Charlie sunk to sleep, and awoke several hours after to be conscious of his lonely situation.

That some one had been near him he knew, for the bandages upon his wounds were not the same that he had placed there; but all was darkness, only the stars shedding light into the canyon, and he was too weak to think, and again sunk to sleep.

When he awoke once more the fire was burning brightly, and he saw a form flitting about.

He tried to speak, and the sound of his voice brought to his side an old Indian woman.

For a moment Charlie believed that he was back again in the village of the Red Buffalo; but he knew he was at least not bound, and the canyon looked to be the same that he remembered to have gone into to rest when he felt that he was going to be ill.

"Who are you?" he asked of the old woman.

She made no reply, and he was too weak to question her more, so once again dropped off into a deep slumber.

Again he awoke.

The sun was shining brightly upon the top of the canyon, his horses were staked out in the upper, and some distance from where he lay, and about him were objects which he knew he did not own.

But no one was visible, yet he knew some kind friend was taking care of him in his sickness and distress.

CHAPTER XX.

THE FATE OF LIGHT HEART.

THE second day after the finding of Charlie Burgess, by Light Heart, the Sioux girl, the youth awoke from a most refreshing nap, and glanced about him, expecting to see the old squaw, who would utter no word to him.

She dressed his wounds regularly, gave him beef-tea to drink, made him comfortable any way she could, kept a pile of fagots constantly on hand to throw on the fire, for the days were growing cold; and he also noticed, changed the horses to better pastures.

Yet, not a word could he get out of her, and he began to believe that she was deaf and dumb.

But to his surprise, his eyes did not fall upon the old squaw, for she was not to be seen.

Yet a form sat on the buffalo-robe beside him, and he gave a start of amazement when he recognized Light Heart.

Instantly he spoke her name, and she turned quickly toward him and said, in her soft way:

"The White Eagle and Light Heart meet again."

"Yes, and the Light Heart has been my friend," he said.

"She has tried to be, for she found him here sick and suffering."

"But where am I?"

She would not answer his question, and bade him keep still, for she knew that excitement might bring on a relapse.

But she told him he was safe, that his fever was gone, and though very weak he would soon be well, for his wounds were healing rapidly.

She also told him that some day soon she would tell him all he cared to know.

With this Charlie was compelled to be satisfied, and soon after the old squaw came and said something to Light Heart, in a low tone.

Without a word to the invalid they took hold of the ends of his blanket, and raising him from the ground, bore him up the canyon.

After a walk of several hundred feet they halted before a bark cabin, which had evidently just been erected.

It was built against the perpendicular side of the canyon, and was well sheltered by the cliff and a surrounding thicket.

Within was a raised bed of small poles laid close together, and a fire burned in the back of the little structure, the smoke finding vent up the side of the cliff.

Hanging here and there was game, and the rifle and belt of arms belonging to Charlie had been placed within reach of the bed.

His robes and blankets were then brought and he found himself soon after upon a more comfortable bed than he had slept upon since he had been a captive.

"The weather is cold, and snow will fall, so Light Heart had Strong Hand help her build this wigwam," said the Indian girl, and then she continued, referring to the squaw:

"Strong Hand will stay with the White Eagle until he is well, for Light Heart must go away."

"But she will come to see him often, for she is his friend," and she was gone before he could reply, and soon after Charlie saw her ride by

the door, mounted upon her spotted pony, and leading his own mustang, and the one he had taken from Fighting Snake.

"Where is my other horse?" he asked the squaw.

But that old woman would make no response, and the poor invalid gave up questioning her.

True to the prediction of the Indian girl, the next morning the ground was covered with snow, and Charlie congratulated himself upon his removal to such comfortable quarters.

The squaw had the cabin half full of logs, and the fire gave forth a genial warmth, and she cooked for the youth a prairie chicken which Light Heart had shot and left for him.

Thus the day passed away, the old squaw regularly dressing his wounds, and forcing upon him the bitter herb tea, and he began to feel his strength coming rapidly back to him.

At night the old woman rolled herself in a bear-skin and lay down before the fire, and though the winds howled without, both she and Charlie were most comfortable within doors.

The following day Light Heart rode up again and entered the cabin.

She seemed rejoiced to see the invalid so far improved, and said she was sorry to have to take his nurse away, as Strong Hand's absence from the village was being noticed.

"What village?" asked Charlie.

"The village of the Dog Soldier Sioux," was the low response, and the young Indian girl dropped her head.

"The White Eagle is glad that the Light Heart left with her father, the Panther, and sorry that her brother, the Little Panther did not go."

"What of the Little Panther?" quickly asked the girl.

Charlie had lived long enough among the Indians, to learn to completely control his emotions and features, and, without the slightest of what show his thoughts were he answered:

"I saw the Little Panther the night before I left the Buffalo's village."

The girl sighed and said:

"The Little Panther has a white heart, and the Panther and the Light Heart hold him not as their blood now."

"The Little Panther is a coward and will never make a great warrior."

Charlie thought so too, but he wisely kept his thoughts secret, and asked:

"Did the Dog Soldier Sioux welcome the Panther and the Light Heart?"

"The Dog Soldiers bade us welcome among their people, and the Panther is now one of their warriors; but his heart is sad that he had to leave his own tribe."

"The old villain ought to have behaved himself," thought Charlie, while he said aloud:

"I hope the Light Heart will be happy; but how far is her village from here?"

The Indian girl held up her fingers to indicate ten miles.

"That's rather close for me," said Charlie.

"The warriors are nearly all away now on the war-path, and ere they return the White Eagle will be well, and the Light Heart will show him the trail to the villages of his people."

Charlie thanked her warmly, and told her how

much he appreciated all she had done for him, and ended with:

"But that reminds me to ask where my horses are?"

"The pony of the White Eagle, and the mustang of the Fighting Snake, the Light Heart took to her own herd to feed; but the horse he got from the Two Face, she left here."

"Here?" asked Charlie in surprise.

"The Light Heart has said it, for Strong Hand made a wigwam for The Wind, and pulled up plenty of buffalo-grass for him to eat."

This was another act of kindness, which Charlie appreciated greatly, and the reference to the mustang caused him to think of asking about the chief.

"Is the band of Dog Sioux the Light Heart and her father have joined, the warriors of Two Face?"

The young maiden nodded and again hung her head in an embarrassed way.

"Did the chief Two Face return in safety to his people?"

"The Two Face escaped from the village of the Red Buffalo and returned to his people," was the reply.

Charlie thought he knew all about that escape, but he did not say so, and asked:

"Where is the Two Face now?"

"Leading his warriors on the war-path."

"I guess it wouldn't be healthy for me now to be caught by any of the stay-at-homes," muttered Charlie, and then Light Heart said in a low tone:

"The Light Heart will speak with a straight tongue to her friend the White Eagle."

"She escaped with her father, as the White Eagle knows; but they were worn out with flying and lay down to rest, when they were surprised and captured by two Pawnee braves."

"The Pawnees would have killed the Panther and taken the Light Heart to their village; but a Dog Soldier Sioux Chief suddenly dashed upon them, killed the Pawnee warriors and rescued the Panther and his daughter."

"It was the Two Face, who had escaped from the Red Buffalo, and was on his way back to his people."

"He recognized the Panther, who told him that he was going to seek his people, the Dog Soldiers; but the Two Face said the tomahawk was not buried between them, and asked that the Light Heart become his wife and the hates of the two chiefs thus end."

"The Light Heart was sad at this, but the Panther said that she should marry the Two Face, and to his village they went, and now the White Eagle finds poor Light Heart the squaw of the Dog Soldier Chief."

"Has the White Eagle heard?"

Charlie had heard, and he was rather glad that the Light Heart had made such a good match, and told her so.

Then the Indian bride and the old squaw took their leave, and Charlie was left to his own reflections.

Strong Hand had filled his cabin with fagots before leaving, and given to the mustang a liberal supply of buffalo-grass, while she had cooked enough food to last Charlie several days, so he did not feel the want of anything, and

knew that in a few more days he would be able to strike out for the home he so longed to return to, that he might once again meet those he so dearly loved, and who he was confident had long since given him up as dead.

But, ere he saw the old home, poor Charlie was destined to pass through many a hardship and danger, as my story will make known.

CHAPTER XXI.

UNWELCOME VISITORS.

SEVERAL days passed away in loneliness to Charlie Burgess, and in that time neither did Light Heart or Strong Hand put in an appearance, as he had expected and hoped one or the other of them would do.

He was able to move about now, his wounds had about healed, so that they gave him no trouble, and he had ventured out each day into the little wicky-up to feed his horse upon the buffalo-grass which the squaw had collected for him.

As he had nothing else to do, he slept most of the time, and one afternoon, the third since he had seen his Indian nurses, soothed by the falling snow, he had sunk into a pleasant slumber.

But it had a rude awakening, for suddenly the door of his cabin was dashed in, and a dozen red-skins stood before him.

To seize his rifle and begin work was but an instant's act, for Charlie saw that they meant to kill him.

Two fell under the rattle of the Winchester, and the others sprung back to gather for a rush upon him.

But just then up dashed a horse and Light Heart suddenly sprung into the doorway and confronted the warriors, while she cried out:

"Let the warriors of Two Face stay their bands, for this pale-face is the friend of Light-Heart."

There were a score of red-skin braves present, and they felt that they had struck a bonanza, and it nettled them to have the young girl interfere.

Two of their number blocked the cabin door and were dead, and Charlie sat upon his bed, his Winchester ready to start another tune, if his foes rushed upon him.

Understanding Sioux perfectly, he heard what Light Heart said, and congratulated himself upon her timely arrival.

How it would all end he did not know, but he was certain that he would set his Winchester to going again at the first hostile demonstration of his enemies, and he still had thirteen shots in it.

"The pale-face is the foe of our people, and two of our braves lay there and he has killed them," said the warrior leader of the band, addressing Light Heart, who answered quickly:

"You sought his scalp and he defended himself."

"He is the friend of the Light Heart, and she will protect him," and she stood in the doorway and across the body of one of the dead braves.

This looked bad for a scalp for the Dog Soldiers, for they knew that their chief was devoted to his young wife, though she had been his bride only a few days before his departure upon the war-trail he was then absent upon.

They were a few of the scrub braves of the Indian village, and had found the trail leading to the canyon, and made by Light Heart, and had followed it.

But their hopes of a scalp had been frustrated by the girl-wife of their chief.

They dared not attack the youth again when she forbade it, and yet they would not leave him there to escape.

Hence the chief held a confab with the young bucks of his band, and the result was that he offered a compromise.

Light Heart asked what that was, and he told her that they would take the young pale-face to the village as their prisoner, and there keep him until the return of Two Face.

This was agreed to by Light Heart, who felt she could either aid Charlie to escape before the return of the chief or make him adopt the brave boy into his tribe, for, though an untutored Indian girl, she knew her power over the wily man she had married.

Charlie was accordingly securely bound, mounted behind one of the warriors, and taken away from his little retreat, while Light Heart rode near him and led his horse, which she at once claimed in the name of her husband.

Arriving in the village of the Dog Soldier Sioux, Charlie was thrown into a stoutly-built log-cabin, which served as a guard-house, and here he was left, still securely bound, and also guarded by a couple of young bucks, who eyed him as though they would be pleased to take his scalp while he was living.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE CHIEF'S TERMS.

It was several weeks before the return of Two Face and his band, and all that time Charlie lay securely bound in his prison.

Light Heart tried to be kind to him, but the guards would not allow it, and the boy was compelled to suffer alone, for he had hardly recovered from his illness, and the harsh treatment he received well-nigh threw him into a relapse.

The long stay away of Two Face and his warriors, was explained, when they came riding into the village, laden down with booty, and driving before them herds of horses, cattle and sheep.

They had struck the white settlements on the Platte, and had made a rich haul, and, what was more, gotten it all to camp.

They had lost but few warriors and taken many scalps, and consequently returned in fine humor, and were greeted according to their deserts by their people in the village.

Light Heart greeted her husband and chief most kindly, and before any other tongue could tell him the story of the poor captive, she did so, making known how he had saved her father from death in the tribe of the Red Buffalo, and how he had escaped, and her finding him almost dying in the canyon.

Her father, the Panther, who had returned with the raiders, corroborated the story of his daughter, that he owed his life to Charlie Burgess, and then Light Heart called up Strong

Hand, the old squaw whom she had sent to the canyon to nurse the pale-face boy.

Then the old squaw proved that she was by no means deaf or dumb, and at once showed that Light Heart had not spoken with a crooked tongue, which is the Indian way of putting it for lying.

To all this Two Face listened in silence, and Light Heart could not tell what he would do, by any expression that rested upon his face.

She knew that Charlie had captured Two Face and taken him to the village of Red Buffalo; but how he had escaped she never knew, for upon that subject her red-skinned liege lord had not enlightened her, it being a secret he wished to keep, as he had hinted that he had gotten away through his own unaided efforts.

"Did the White Eagle speak of Two Face?" he asked as a feeler, to see if Charlie had told that he had rescued him from the fearful death it was intended should be his.

"The White Eagle asked if the Two Face had come in safety back to his people," answered Light Heart.

"Said the White Eagle no more about the Two Face?"

"The White Eagle said only that the Two Face was a brave warrior, and a greater chief than the Red Buffalo."

In spite of his stolidity it could be seen that the chief was tickled at this, for Two Face had a high respect for the opinions of the pale-face boy.

"The Two Face will spare the White Eagle?" urged the young wife, and the Panther joined in the request.

Two Face reminded them that Charlie had killed two of his horses, and with the rifle he had taken from him, besides having come to the vicinity of the Dog Soldier village mounted upon his own—Two Face's—horse.

There was no denying these facts, but still Light Heart urged, and Two Face went to see his prisoner, and said he would then decide.

He found the boy pale, emaciated and suffering; very little like the daring youth who had so cleverly captured him.

Charlie told his story, and it agreed perfectly with that told by Light Heart; but he made no allusion to having saved the chief, and this pleased him.

"The White Eagle shall not die if he will become one of my braves," he said at last.

Charlie's heart sunk within him, for he saw before him a long captivity once more.

But life with the Indians, with hope of escape, was better than certain death, and he accepted the terms of the chief, and was at once set free, to once more become a dweller in a red-skin camp.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONCLUSION.

For a long, long time did Charlie Burgess dwell with the Indians, unable to get away, so closely was he watched, and, to escape from going upon the war-path against his own race he studied the nature of herbs, roots and plants, and boldly proclaimed himself a medicine-man.

Interested in his study and practice, he became quite skillful in cures and in dressing wounds, winning from the Indians the name of the "Boy Medicine Man," a name which clings to him still with others he has as deservedly won.

When at last he managed to make his escape, one night, when hotly pursued, he ran upon a band of Indians encamped in some timber, and hearing the Pawnee tongue he knew that he was safe, for the Pawnees had long been the friends of the whites.

Taken before the boy chief of the Pawnees, to his delight he found himself face to face with his brother Eddie, who had become the leader of the tribe, and known as Yellow Hair.

Long talks the two brothers—so cruelly parted, so strangely met—had together, and then Charlie determined to offer his services to the Government to hunt down the savage Sioux, whose haunts he so well knew.

Promptly was he accepted as a scout, and became known to the soldiers as "Nebraska Charlie," a name he now bears, although he also won the title of "Wild Charlie" from his many reckless and wild adventures in trailing redskins to avenge the sufferings he had known.

To-day "Nebraska Charlie" and his brother "Yellow Hair, the Boy Chief," are rancheros on the Platte, and respected citizens of the grand State of Nebraska, whose prairies have been the theater of so many wild scenes and daring deeds in border warfare.

THE END.

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